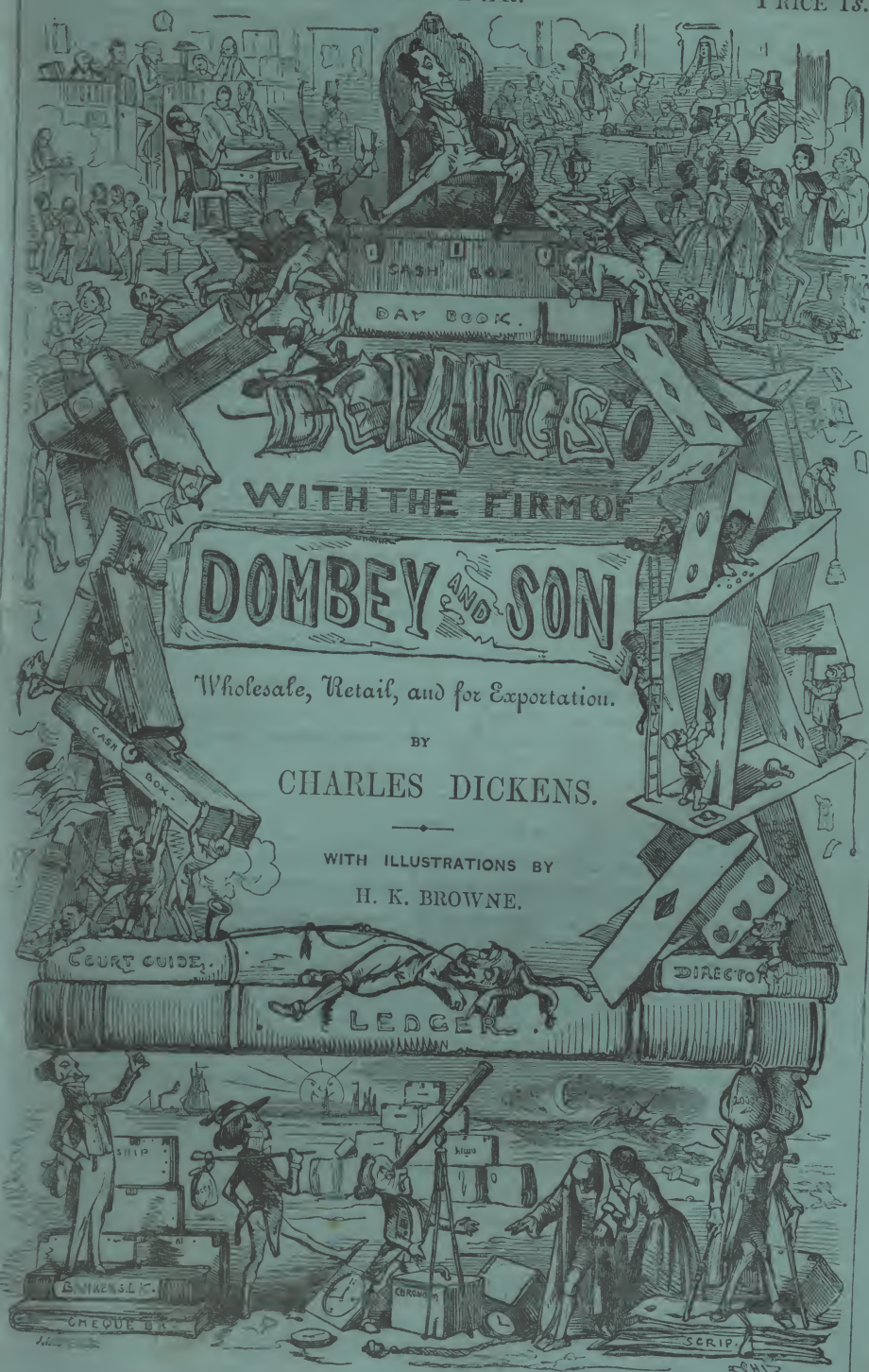


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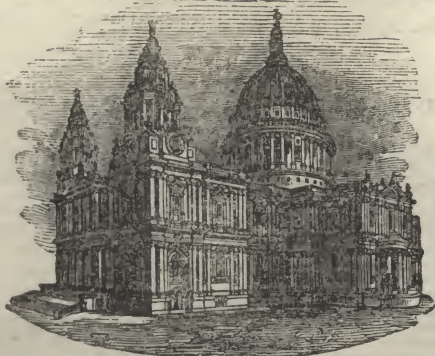
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The principle upon which this Peruke is made is so superior to everything yet produced, that the Manufacturer invites the honour of a visit from the Sceptic and the Connoisseur, that one may be convinced and the other gratified, by inspecting this and other novel and beautiful specimens of the Perruqueian Art, at the establishment of the Sole Inventor, F. BROWNE, 47, FENCHURCH-ST.

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From the Forehead over to the poll, as deep each way as required .....

From one Temple to the other, across the rise or Crown of the head to where the Hair grows

As dotted 1 to 1.	Inches.	Eighths
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THE CHARGE FOR THIS UNIQUE HEAD OF HAIR ONLY £1 10s.



Brown 4s. 6d. per bottle.  
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WHICH IS THE BEST FOREIGN BRANDY,

**THE PATENT BRANDY, AND THE GENUINE SELTERS WATER,**  
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Are the best remedy yet discovered for COUGHS, HOARSENESS, and all ASTHMATIC & PULMONARY COMPLAINTS.  
They are agreeable in flavour and safe in use.

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SIR,—I cannot resist informing you of the extraordinary effect that I have experienced by taking only a few of your Lozenges. I had a cough for several weeks, that defied all that had been prescribed for me; and yet I got completely rid of it by taking about half a small box of your Lozenges, which I find are the only ones that relieve the cough without deranging the stomach or digestive organs.

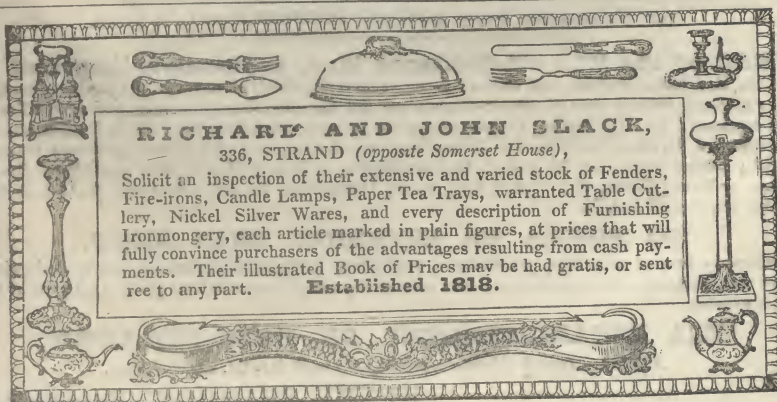
I am, Sir your humble servant,

P. HAWKER.

To Mr. KEATING, &c., 79, St. Paul's Church Yard, London.

Prepared and sold in Boxes, 1s. 1½d., and Tins, 2s. 9d., 4s. 6d., and 10s. 6d. each, by THOMAS KEATING, Chemist, &c., No. 79, St. Paul's Church-yard, London.

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## COFFEE AS IN FRANCE.



**IT** is a fact beyond dispute, that in order to obtain really fine **COFFEE**, there must be a combination of the various kinds; and to produce strength and flavour, certain proportions should be mixed, according to their different properties; thus it is we have become celebrated for our delicious **COFFEE**, at 1s. 8d., which is the astonishment and delight of all who have tasted it, being the produce of Four Countries, selected and mixed by rule peculiar to our Establishment, in proportions not known to any other house.

From experiments we have made on the various kinds of **COFFEE**, we have arrived at the fact, that no one kind possesses strength and flavour; if we select a very strong **COFFEE**, it is wanting in flavour, by the same rule we find the finest and most flavoured are generally wanting in strength; and as they are usually sold each kind separately, quite regardless of their various properties, the consumer is unable to obtain really fine **COFFEE** at any price. There is, also, another peculiar advantage which we possess over other houses—our roasting apparatus being constructed on decidedly scientific principles, whereby the strong aromatic flavour of the **COFFEE** is preserved, which in the ordinary process of roasting is entirely destroyed; and as we are **COFFEE** roasters, we are enabled to keep a full supply fresh roasted continually, after the Parisian and Continental method.

The rapid and still increasing demand for this **COFFEE** has caused great excitement in the trade; and several unprincipled houses have copied our papers, and professed to sell a similar article. We therefore think it right to **CAUTION** the Public, and to state that our superior mixture of Four Countries is a discovery of our own, and therefore the proportions are not known, nor can it be had of any other house, and that in future we shall distinguish it from all others as

**SPARROW'S CONTINENTAL COFFEE, at 1s. 8d. per lb.**

*Packed in Tins of all sizes, perfectly air-tight, for the Country.*

\*\*\* We have also Strong and Useful **COFFEES**, from 1s. to 1s. 4d.

**TEAS** of the true old-fashioned kind, as formerly imported by the East India Company, and with which the name of **SPARROW** has for many years been identified, at the following reduced scale of prices:—Strong and full flavoured Congou, a most economical Tea for large consumers, 3s. 8d.; Sterling Congou, of superior strength and flavour, 4s.; Finest Congou, strongly recommended, 4s. 4d.; Fine Ripe Old Pekoe, Souchong flavour, one of the finest specimens imported, 4s. 8d.; Strong Green, 3s. 8d. to 4s.; Genuine Hyson, or Young Hyson, 5s.; the Finest Cowslip Hyson, or Young Hyson, very fragrant, 6s.; Strong Gunpowder, 5s. 4d. to 6s.; and the Finest Gunpowder, heavy pearl leaf, 7s.

**NO BOHEA OR INFERIOR TEAS KEPT.**

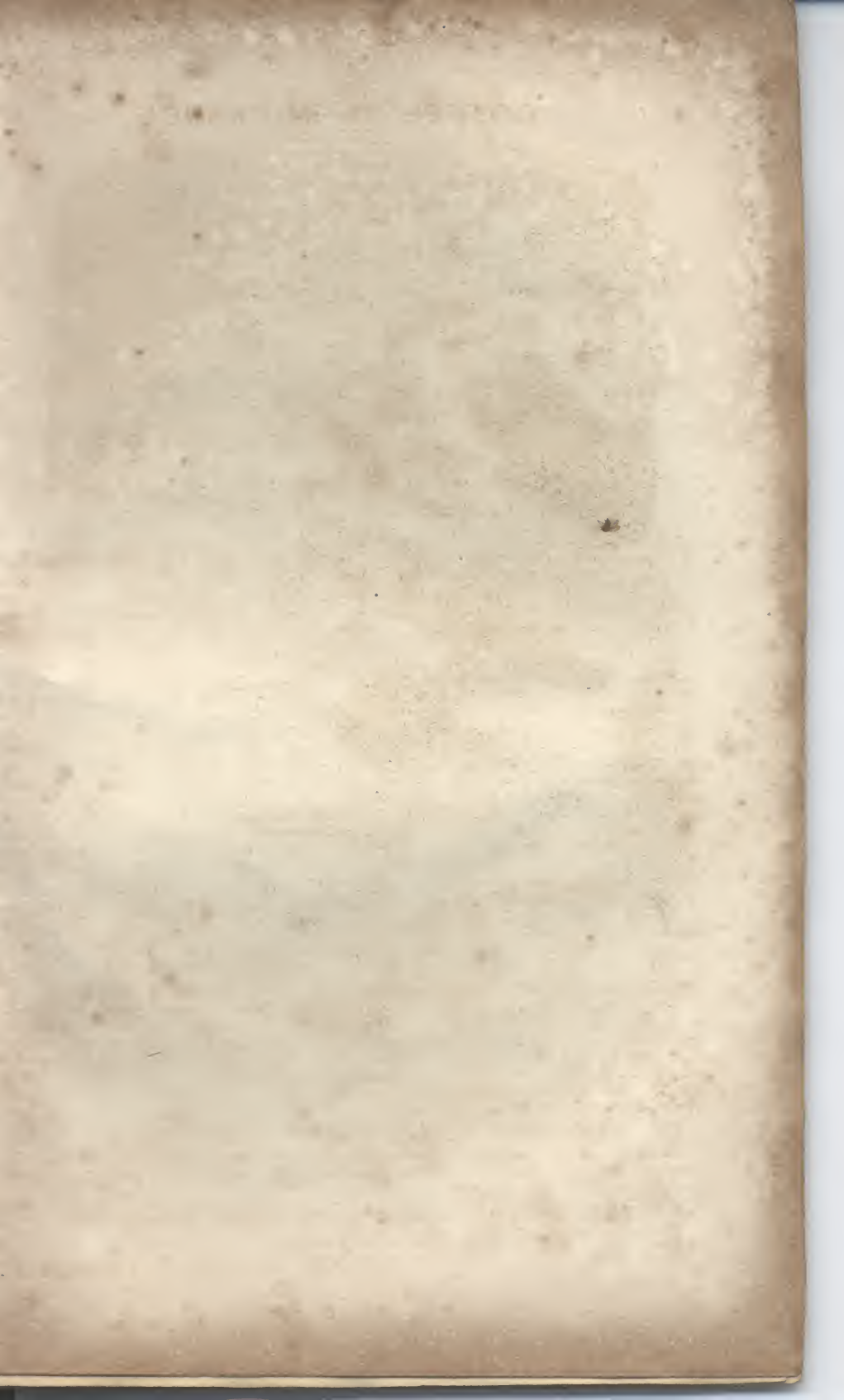
Orders, by post or otherwise, containing a remittance, or respectable reference, will be dealt with in a way that will insure recommendations. The carts of this establishment deliver goods in all parts of town free of expense.

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**HENRY SPARROW, PROPRIETOR.**





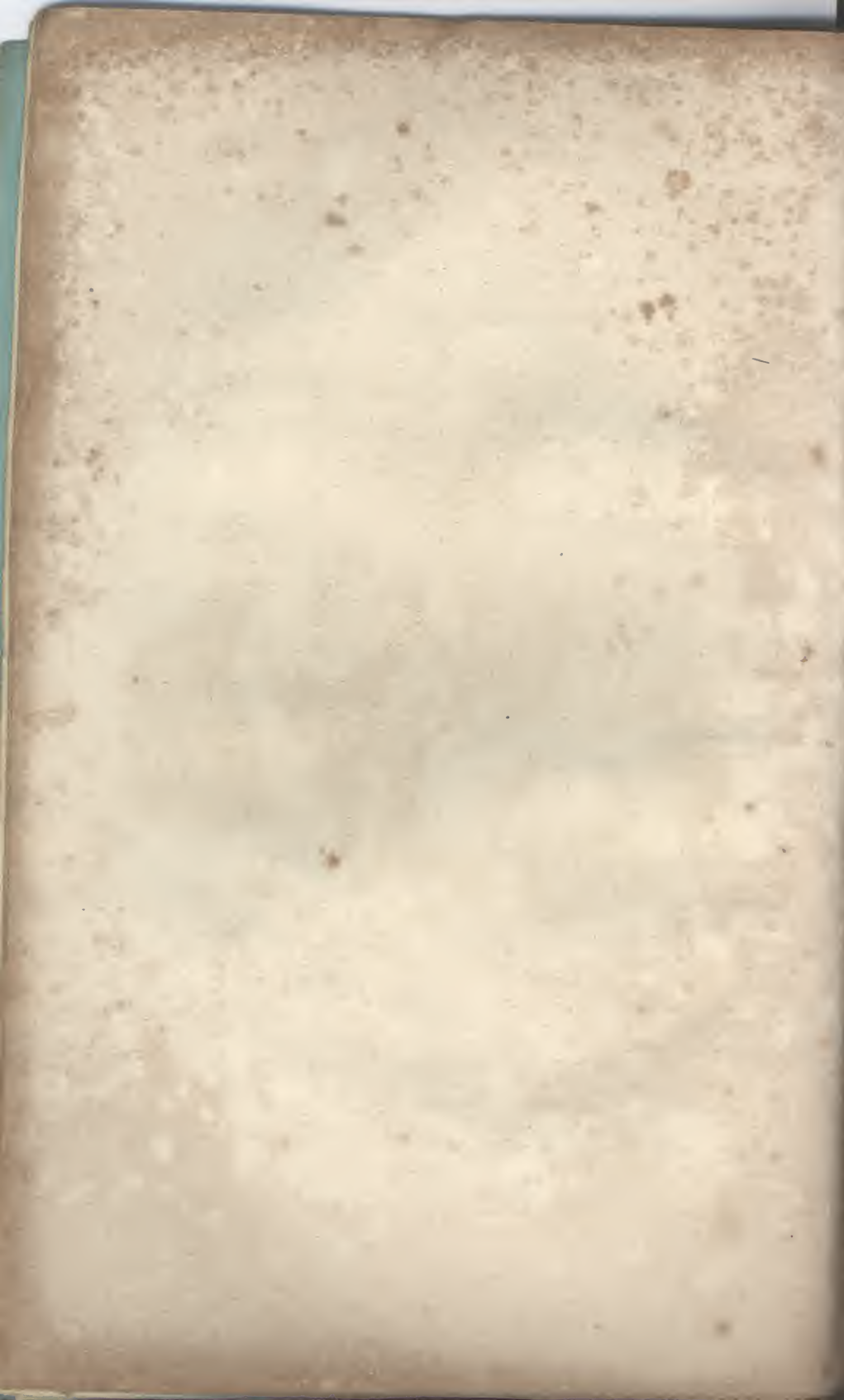


*Mr. Dingley at home*





*Miss Fox pays a visit to the Toodle Family*





# CHAPTER XXXV.

## THE HAPPY PAIR.

THE dark blot on the street is gone. Mr. Dombey's mansion, if it be a gap among the other houses any longer, is only so because it is not to be vied with in its brightness, and haughtily casts them off. The saying is, that home is home, be it never so homely. If it hold good in the opposite contingency, and home is home be it never so stately, what an altar to the Household Gods is raised up here!

Lights are sparkling in the windows this evening, and the ruddy glow of fires is warm and bright upon the hangings and soft carpets, and the dinner waits to be served, and the dinner-table is handsomely set forth, though only for four persons, and the sideboard is cumbrous with plate. It is the first time that the house has been arranged for occupation since its late changes, and the happy pair are looked for every minute.

Only second to the wedding morning, in the interest and expectation it engenders among the household, is this evening of the coming home. Mrs. Perch is in the kitchen taking tea; and has made the tour of the establishment, and priced the silks and damasks by the yard, and exhausted every interjection in the dictionary and out of it expressive of admiration and wonder. The upholsterer's foreman, who has left his hat, with a pocket-handkerchief in it, both smelling strongly of varnish, under a chair in the hall, lurks about the house, gazing upward at the cornices, and downward at the carpets, and occasionally, in a silent transport of enjoyment, taking a rule out of his pocket, and skirmishingly measuring expensive objects, with unutterable feelings. Cook is in high spirits, and says give *her* a place where there's plenty of company (as she'll bet you sixpence there will be now), for she is of a lively disposition, and she always was from a child, and she don't mind who knows it; which sentiment elicits from the breast of Mrs. Perch a responsive murmur of support and approbation. All the housemaid hopes is, happiness for 'em—but marriage is a lottery, and the more she thinks about it, the more she feels the independence and the safety of a single life. Mr. Towlinson is saturnine and grim, and says that's his opinion too, and give him War besides, and down with the French—for this young man has a general impression that every foreigner is a Frenchman, and must be by the laws of nature.

At each new sound of wheels, they all stop, whatever they are saying, and listen; and more than once there is a general starting up and a cry of "Here they are!" But here they are not yet; and Cook begins to mourn over the dinner, which has been put back twice, and the upholsterer's foreman still goes lurking about the rooms, undisturbed in his blissful reverie!

Florence is ready to receive her father and her new mama. Whether

the emotions that are throbbing in her breast originate in pleasure or in pain, she hardly knows. But the fluttering heart sends added colour to her cheeks, and brightness to her eyes; and they say down stairs, drawing their heads together—for they always speak softly when they speak of her—how beautiful Miss Florence looks to-night, and what a sweet young lady she has grown, poor dear! A pause succeeds; and then Cook, feeling, as president, that her sentiments are waited for, wonders whether—and there stops. The housemaid wonders too, and so does Mrs. Perch, who has the happy social faculty of always wondering when other people wonder, without being at all particular what she wonders at. Mr. Towlinson, who now describes an opportunity of bringing down the spirits of the ladies to his own level, says wait and see: he wishes some people were well out of this. Cook leads a sigh then, and a murmur of “Ah, it’s a strange world,—it is indeed!” and when it has gone round the table, adds persuasively, “but Miss Florence can’t well be the worse for any change, Tom.” Mr. Towlinson’s rejoinder, pregnant with frightful meaning, is “Oh, can’t she though!” and sensible that a mere man can scarcely be more prophetic, or improve upon that, he holds his peace.

Mrs. Skewton, prepared to greet her darling daughter and dear son-in-law with open arms, is appropriately attired for that purpose in a very youthful costume, with short sleeves. At present, however, her ripe charms are blooming in the shade of her own apartments, whence she has not emerged since she took possession of them a few hours ago, and where she is fast growing fretful, on account of the postponement of dinner. The maid who ought to be a skeleton, but is in truth a buxom damsel, is, on the other hand, in a most amiable state: considering her quarterly stipend much safer than heretofore, and foreseeing a great improvement in her board and lodging.

Where are the happy pair, for whom this brave home is waiting? Do steam, tide, wind, and horses, all abate their speed, to linger on such happiness? Does the swarm of loves and graces hovering about them retard their progress by its numbers? Are there so many flowers in their happy path, that they can scarcely move along, without entanglement in thornless roses, and sweetest briar?

They are here at last! The noise of wheels is heard, grows louder, and a carriage drives up to the door! A thundering knock from the obnoxious foreigner anticipates the rush of Mr. Towlinson and party to open it; and Mr. Dombey and his bride alight, and walk in arm and arm.

“My sweetest Edith!” cries an agitated voice upon the stairs. “My dearest Dombey!” and the short sleeves wreath themselves about the happy couple in turn, and embrace them.

Florence had come down to the hall too, but did not advance: reserving her timid welcome until these nearer and dearer transports should subside. But the eyes of Edith sought her out, upon the threshold; and dismissing her sensitive parent with a slight kiss on the cheek, she hurried on to Florence, and embraced her.

“How do you do, Florence?” said Mr. Dombey, putting out his hand. As Florence, trembling, raised it to her lips, she met his glance. The look was cold and distant enough, but it stirred her heart to think that she observed in it something more of interest than he had ever shown



before. It even expressed a kind of faint surprise, and not a disagreeable surprise, at sight of her. She dared not raise her eyes to his any more; but she felt that he looked at her once again, and not less favourably. Oh what a thrill of joy shot through her, awakened by even this intangible and baseless confirmation of her hope that she would learn to win him, through her new and beautiful mama!

"You will not be long dressing, Mrs. Dombey, I presume?" said Mr. Dombey.

"I shall be ready immediately."

"Let them send up dinner in a quarter of an hour."

With that Mr. Dombey stalked away to his own dressing-room, and Mrs. Dombey went up stairs to hers. Mrs. Skewton and Florence repaired to the drawing-room, where that excellent mother considered it incumbent on her to shed a few irrepressible tears, supposed to be forced from her by her daughter's felicity; and which she was still drying, very gingerly, with a laced corner of her pocket-handkerchief, when her son-in-law appeared.

"And how my dearest Dombey did you find that delightfulest of cities, Paris?" she asked, subduing her emotion.

"It was cold," returned Mr. Dombey.

"Gay as ever," said Mrs. Skewton, "of course."

"Not particularly. I thought it dull," said Mr. Dombey.

"Fie my dearest Dombey!" archly; "dull!"

"It made that impression upon me, Madam," said Mr. Dombey with grave politeness. "I believe Mrs. Dombey found it dull too. She mentioned once or twice that she thought it so."

"Why, you naughty girl!" cried Mrs. Skewton, rallying her dear child, who now entered, "what dreadfully heretical things have you been saying about Paris?"

Edith raised her eyebrows with an air of weariness; and passing the folding-doors which were thrown open to display the suite of rooms in their new and handsome garniture, and barely glancing at them as she passed, sat down by Florence.

"My dear Dombey," said Mrs. Skewton, "how charmingly these people have carried out every idea that we hinted. They have made a perfect palace of the house, positively."

"It is handsome," said Mr. Dombey, looking round. "I directed that no expense should be spared; and all that money could do, has been done, I believe."

"And what can it not do, dear Dombey?" observed Cleopatra.

"It is powerful, Madam," said Mr. Dombey.

He looked in his solemn way towards his wife, but not a word said she.

"I hope Mrs. Dombey," addressing her after a moment's silence, with especial distinctness; "that these alterations meet with your approval?"

"They are as handsome as they can be," she returned, with haughty carelessness. "They should be so, of course. And I suppose they are."

An expression of scorn was habitual to the proud face, and seemed inseparable from it; but the contempt with which it received any appeal to admiration, respect, or consideration on the ground of his riches, no matter how slight or ordinary in itself, was a new and different expression,

unequalled in intensity by any other of which it was capable. Whether Mr. Dombey, wrapped in his own greatness, was at all aware of this, or no, there had not been wanting opportunities already for his complete enlightenment; and at that moment it might have been effected by the one glance of the dark eye that lighted on him, after it had rapidly and scornfully surveyed the theme of his self-glorification. He might have read in that one glance that nothing that his wealth could do, though it were increased ten thousand fold, could win him for its own sake, one look of softened recognition from the defiant woman, linked to him, but arrayed with her whole soul against him. He might have read in that one glance that even for its sordid and mercenary influence upon herself, she spurned it, while she claimed its utmost power as her right, her bargain—as the base and worthless recompense for which she had become his wife. He might have read in it that, ever baring her own head for the lightning of her own contempt and pride to strike, the most innocent allusion to the power of his riches degraded her anew, sunk her deeper in her own respect, and made the blight and waste within her, more complete.

But dinner was announced, and Mr. Dombey led down Cleopatra; Edith and his daughter following. Sweeping past the gold and silver demonstration on the sideboard as if it were heaped-up dirt, and deigning to bestow no look upon the elegancies around her, she took her place at his board for the first time, and sat, like a statue, at the feast.

Mr. Dombey, being a good deal in the statue way himself, was well enough pleased to see his handsome wife immoveable and proud and cold. Her deportment being always elegant and graceful, this as a general behaviour, was agreeable and congenial to him. Presiding, therefore, with his accustomed dignity, and not at all reflecting on his wife by any warmth or hilarity of his own, he performed his share of the honours of the table with a cool satisfaction; and the installation dinner, though not regarded down-stairs as a great success or very promising beginning, passed off, above, in a sufficiently polite, genteel, and frosty manner.

Soon after tea, Mrs. Skewton, who affected to be quite overcome and worn out by her emotions of happiness, arising in the contemplation of her dear child united to the man of her heart, but who, there is reason to suppose, found this family party somewhat dull, as she yawned for one hour continually behind her fan, retired to bed. Edith, also, silently withdrew and came back no more. Thus, it happened that Florence, who had been up-stairs to have some conversation with Diogenes, returning to the drawing-room with her little work-basket, found no one there but her father, who was walking to and fro, in dreary magnificence.

"I beg your pardon. Shall I go away, Papa?" said Florence faintly, hesitating at the door.

"No," returned Mr. Dombey, looking round over his shoulder; "you can come and go here, Florence, as you please. This is not my private room."

Florence entered, and sat down at a distant little table with her work: finding herself for the first time in her life—for the very first time within her memory from her infancy to that hour—alone with her father, as his companion. She, his natural companion, his only child, who in her



lonely life and grief had known the suffering of a breaking heart ; who, in her rejected love, had never breathed his name to God at night, but with a tearful blessing, heavier on him than a curse ; who had prayed to die young, so she might only die in his arms ; who had, all through, repaid the agony of slight and coldness, and dislike, with patient unexacting love, excusing him, and pleading for him, like his better angel !

She trembled, and her eyes were dim. His figure seemed to grow in height and bulk before her as he paced the room : now it was all blurred and indistinct ; now clear again, and plain ; and now she seemed to think that this had happened, just the same, a multitude of years ago. She yearned towards him, and yet shrunk from his approach. Unnatural emotion in a child, innocent of wrong ! Unnatural the hand that had directed the sharp plough, which furrowed up her gentle nature for the sowing of its seeds !

Bent upon not distressing or offending him by her distress, Florence controlled herself, and sat quietly at her work. After a few more turns across and across the room, he left off pacing it ; and withdrawing into a shadowy corner at some distance, where there was an easy chair, covered his head with a handkerchief, and composed himself to sleep.

It was enough for Florence to sit there, watching him ; turning her eyes towards his chair from time to time ; watching him with her thoughts, when her face was intent upon her work ; and sorrowfully glad to think that he *could* sleep, while she was there, and that he was not made restless by her strange and long-forbidden presence.

What would have been her thoughts if she had known that he was steadily regarding her ; that the veil upon his face, by accident or by design, was so adjusted that his sight was free, and that it never wandered from her face an instant. That when she looked towards him, in the obscure dark corner, her speaking eyes, more earnest and pathetic in their voiceless speech than all the orators of all the world, and impeaching him more nearly in their mute address, met his, and did not know it. That when she bent her head again over her work, he drew his breath more easily, but with the same attention looked upon her still—upon her white brow and her falling hair, and busy hands ; and once attracted, seemed to have no power to turn his eyes away !

And what were his thoughts meanwhile ? With what emotions did he prolong the attentive gaze covertly directed on his unknown daughter ? Was there reproach to him in the quiet figure and the mild eyes ? Had he begun to feel her disregarded claims, and did they touch him home at last, and waken him to some sense of his cruel injustice ?

There are yielding moments in the lives of the sternest and harshest men, though such men often keep their secret well. The sight of her in her beauty, almost changed into a woman without his knowledge, may have struck out some such moments even in his life of pride. Some passing thought that he had had a happy home within his reach—had had a household spirit bending at his feet—had overlooked it in his stiff-necked sullen arrogance, and wandered away and lost himself, may have engendered them. Some simple eloquence distinctly heard, though only uttered in her eyes, unconscious that he read them, as “ By the death-beds I have tended, by the childhood I have suffered, by our meeting in this dreary house at midnight, by the cry wrung from me in the anguish of my heart, oh, father, turn to me and seek a refuge in my love before it is too

late!" may have arrested them. Meaner and lower thoughts, as that his dead boy was now superseded by new ties, and he could forgive the having been supplanted in his affection, may have occasioned them. The mere association of her as an ornament, with all the ornament and pomp about him, may have been sufficient. But as he looked, he softened to her, more and more. As he looked, she became blended with the child he had loved, and he could hardly separate the two. As he looked, he saw her for an instant by a clearer and a brighter light, not bending over that child's pillow as his rival—monstrous thought—but as the spirit of his home, and in the action tending himself no less, as he sat once more with his bowed-down head upon his hand at the foot of the little bed. He felt inclined to speak to her, and call her to him. The words "Florence, come here!" were rising to his lips—but slowly and with difficulty, they were so very strange—when they were checked and stifled by a footstep on the stair.

It was his wife's. She had exchanged her dinner dress for a loose robe, and unbound her hair, which fell freely about her neck. But this was not the change in her that startled him.

"Florence, dear," she said, "I have been looking for you everywhere."

As she sat down by the side of Florence, she stooped and kissed her hand. He hardly knew his wife. She was so changed. It was not merely that her smile was new to him—though that he had never seen; but her manner, the tone of her voice, the light of her eyes, the interest, and confidence, and winning wish to please, expressed in all—this was not Edith.

"Softly, dear Mama. Papa is asleep."

It was Edith now. She looked towards the corner where he was, and he knew that face and manner very well.

"I scarcely thought you could be here, Florence."

Again, how altered and how softened, in an instant!

"I left here early," pursued Edith, "purposely to sit up-stairs and talk with you. But, going to your room, I found my bird was flown, and I have been waiting there ever since, expecting its return."

If it had been a bird, indeed, she could not have taken it more tenderly and gently to her breast, than she did Florence.

"Come, dear!"

"Papa will not expect to find me, I suppose, when he wakes," hesitated Florence.

"Do you think he will, Florence?" said Edith, looking full upon her.

Florence drooped her head, and rose, and put up her work-basket. Edith drew her hand through her arm, and they went out of the room like sisters. Her very step was different and new to him, Mr. Dombey thought, as his eyes followed her to the door.

He sat in his shadowy corner so long, that the church clocks struck the hour three times before he moved that night. All that while his face was still intent upon the spot where Florence had been seated. The room grew darker, as the candles waned and went out; but a darkness gathered on his face, exceeding any that the night could cast, and rested there.

Florence and Edith, seated before the fire in the remote room where little Paul had died, talked together for a long time. Diogenes, who was of the party, had at first objected to the admission of Edith, and, even in deference to his mistress's wish, had only permitted it under growling protest. But, emerging by little and little from the ante-room, whither



he had retired in dudgeon, he soon appeared to comprehend, that with the most amiable intentions he had made one of those mistakes which will occasionally arise in the best-regulated dogs' minds; as a friendly apology for which he stuck himself up on end between the two, in a very hot place, in front of the fire, and sat panting at it, with his tongue out, and a most imbecile expression of countenance, listening to the conversation.

It turned, at first, on Florence's books and favourite pursuits, and on the manner in which she had beguiled the interval since the marriage. The last theme opened up to her a subject which lay very near her heart, and she said, with the tears starting to her eyes:

"Oh, Mama! I have had a great sorrow since that day."

"You a great sorrow, Florence!"

"Yes. Poor Walter is drowned."

Florence spread her hands before her face, and wept with all her heart. Many as were the secret tears which Walter's fate had cost her, they flowed yet, when she thought or spoke of him.

"But tell me, dear," said Edith, soothing her. "Who was Walter? What was he to you?"

"He was my brother, Mama. After dear Paul died, we said we would be brother and sister. I had known him a long time—from a little child. He knew Paul, who liked him very much; Paul said, almost at the last, 'Take care of Walter, dear Papa! I was fond of him!' Walter had been brought in to see him, and was there then—in this room."

"And *did* he take care of Walter?" inquired Edith, sternly.

"Papa? He appointed him to go abroad. He was drowned in shipwreck on his voyage," said Florence, sobbing.

"Does he know that he is dead?" asked Edith.

"I cannot tell, Mama. I have no means of knowing. Dear Mama!" cried Florence, clinging to her as for help, and hiding her face upon her bosom, "I know that you have seen—"

"Stay! Stop, Florence." Edith turned so pale, and spoke so earnestly, that Florence did not need her restraining hand upon her lips. "Tell me all about Walter first; let me understand this history all through."

Florence related it, and everything belonging to it, even down to the friendship of Mr. Toots, of whom she could hardly speak in her distress without a tearful smile, although she was deeply grateful to him. When she had concluded her account, to the whole of which Edith, holding her hand, listened with close attention, and when a silence had succeeded, Edith said:

"What is it that you know I have seen, Florence?"

"That I am not," said Florence, with the same mute appeal, and the same quick concealment of her face as before, "that I am not a favourite child, Mama. I never have been. I have never known how to be. I have missed the way, and had no one to show it to me. Oh, let me learn from you how to become dearer to Papa. Teach me! you, who can so well!" and clinging closer to her, with some broken fervent words of gratitude and endearment, Florence, relieved of her sad secret, wept long, but not as painfully as of yore, within the encircling arms of her new mother.

Pale, even to her lips, and with a face that strove for composure until

its proud beauty was as fixed as death, Edith looked down upon the weeping girl, and once kissed her. Then, gradually disengaging herself, and putting Florence away, she said, stately and quiet, as a marble image, and in a voice that deepened as she spoke, but had no other token of emotion in it:

"Florence, you do not know me! Heaven forbid that you should learn from me!"

"Not learn from you?" repeated Florence, in surprise.

"That I should teach you how to love, or be loved, Heaven forbid!" said Edith. "If you could teach me, that were better; but it is too late. You are dear to me, Florence. I did not think that anything could ever be so dear to me, as you are in this little time."

She saw that Florence would have spoken here, so checked her with her hand, and went on.

"I will be your true friend always. I will cherish you, as much, if not as well as any one in this world could. You may trust in me—I know it and I say it, dear—with the whole confidence even of your pure heart. There are hosts of women whom he might have married, better and truer in all other respects than I am, Florence; but there is not one who could come here, his wife, whose heart could beat with greater truth to you than mine does."

"I know it, dear Mama!" cried Florence. "From that first most happy day I have known it."

"Most happy day!" Edith seemed to repeat the words involuntarily, and went on. "Though the merit is not mine, for I thought little of you until I saw you, let the undeserved reward be mine in your trust and love. And in this—in this, Florence; on the first night of my taking up my abode here; I am led on as it is best I should be, to say it for the first and last time."

Florence, without knowing why, felt almost afraid to hear her proceed, but kept her eyes rivetted on the beautiful face so fixed upon her own.

"Never seek to find in me," said Edith, laying her hand upon her breast, "what is not here. Never if you can help it, Florence, fall off from me because it is *not* here. Little by little you will know me better, and the time will come when you will know me, as I know myself. Then, be as lenient to me as you can, and do not turn to bitterness the only sweet remembrance I shall have."

The tears that were visible in her eyes as she kept them fixed on Florence, showed that the composed face was but as a handsome mask; but she preserved it, and continued:

"I have seen what you say, and know how true it is. But believe me—you will soon, if you cannot now—there is no one on this earth less qualified to set it right or help you, Florence, than I. Never ask me why, or speak to me about it or of my husband, more. There should be, so far, a division, and a silence between us two, like the grave itself."

She sat for some time silent; Florence scarcely venturing to breathe meanwhile, as dim and imperfect shadows of the truth, and all its daily consequences, chased each other through her terrified, yet incredulous imagination. Almost as soon as she had ceased to speak, Edith's face began to subside from its set composure to that quieter and more relenting aspect, which it usually wore when she and Florence were alone together.



She shaded it, after this change, with her hands; and when she arose, and with an affectionate embrace bade Florence good night, went quickly, and without looking round.

But when Florence was in bed, and the room was dark except for the glow of the fire, Edith returned, and saying that she could not sleep, and that her dressing-room was lonely, drew a chair upon the hearth, and watched the embers as they died away. Florence watched them too from her bed, until they, and the noble figure before them, crowned with its flowing hair, and in its thoughtful eyes reflecting back their light, became confused and indistinct, and finally were lost in slumber.

In her sleep, however, Florence could not lose an undefined impression of what had so recently passed. It formed the subject of her dreams, and haunted her; now in one shape, now in another; but always oppressively; and with a sense of fear. She dreamed of seeking her father in wildernesses, of following his track up fearful heights, and down into deep mines and caverns; of being charged with something that would release him from extraordinary suffering—she knew not what, or why—yet never being able to attain the goal and set him free. Then, she saw him dead, upon that very bed, and in that very room, and knew that he had never loved her to the last, and fell upon his cold breast, passionately weeping. Then, a prospect opened, and a river flowed, and a plaintive voice she knew, cried, "It is running on, Floy! It has never stopped! You are moving with it!" And she saw him at a distance stretching out his arms towards her, while a figure such as Walter's used to be, stood near him, awfully serene and still. In every vision, Edith came and went, sometimes to her joy, sometimes to her sorrow, until they were alone upon the brink of a dark grave, and Edith pointing down, she looked and saw—what!—another Edith lying at the bottom.

In the terror of this dream, she cried out, and awoke, she thought. A soft voice seemed to whisper in her ear, "Florence, dear Florence, it is nothing but a dream!" and stretching out her arms, she returned the caress of her new mama, who then went out at the door in the light of the grey morning. In a moment, Florence sat up wondering whether this had really taken place or not; but she was only certain that it was grey morning indeed, and that the blackened ashes of the fire were on the hearth, and that she was alone.

So passed the night on which the happy pair came home.

## CHAPTER XXXVI.

### HOUSEWARMING.

MANY succeeding days passed in like manner; except that there were numerous visits received and paid, and that Mrs. Skewton held little levees in her own apartments, at which Major Bagstock was a frequent attendant, and that Florence encountered no second look from her father, although she saw him every day. Nor had she much communication in words with her new mama, who was imperious and proud to all the house but her—Florence could not but observe that—and who, although

she always sent for her or went to her when she came home from visiting, and would always go into her room at night, before retiring to rest, however late the hour, and never lost an opportunity of being with her, was often her silent and thoughtful companion for a long time together.

Florence, who had hoped for so much from this marriage, could not help sometimes comparing the bright house with the faded dreary place out of which it had arisen, and wondering when, in any shape, it would begin to be a home; for that it was no home then, for any one, though everything went on luxuriously and regularly, she had always a secret misgiving. Many an hour of sorrowful reflection by day and night, and many a tear of blighted hope, Florence bestowed upon the assurance her new mama had given her so strongly, that there was no one on the earth more powerless than herself to teach her how to win her father's heart. And soon Florence began to think—resolved to think, would be the truer phrase—that as no one knew so well, how hopeless of being subdued or changed her father's coldness to her was, so she had given her this warning, and forbidden the subject, in very compassion. Unselfish here, as in her every act and fancy, Florence preferred to bear the pain of this new wound, rather than encourage any faint foreshadowings of the truth as it concerned her father; tender of him, even in her wandering thoughts. As for his home, she hoped it would become a better one, when its state of novelty and transition should be over; and for herself, thought little and lamented less.

If none of the new family were particularly at home in private, it was resolved that Mrs. Dombey at least should be at home in public, without delay. A series of entertainments in celebration of the late nuptials, and in cultivation of society, were arranged, chiefly by Mr. Dombey and Mrs. Skewton; and it was settled that the festive proceedings should commence by Mrs. Dombey's being at home upon a certain evening, and by Mr. and Mrs. Dombey's requesting the honour of the company of a great many incongruous people to dinner on the same day.

Accordingly Mr. Dombey produced a list of sundry eastern magnates who were to be bidden to this feast, on his behalf; to which Mrs. Skewton, acting for her dearest child, who was haughtily careless on the subject, subjoined a western list, comprising Cousin Feenix, not yet returned to Baden Baden, greatly to the detriment of his personal estate; and a variety of moths of various degrees and ages, who had, at various times, fluttered round the light of her fair daughter, or herself, without any lasting injury to their wings. Florence was enrolled as a member of the dinner-party, by Edith's command—elicited by a moment's doubt and hesitation on the part of Mrs. Skewton; and Florence, with a wondering heart, and with a quick instinctive sense of everything that grated on her father, in the least, took her silent share in the proceedings of the day.

The proceedings commenced by Mr. Dombey, in a cravat of extraordinary height and stiffness, walking restlessly about the drawing-room until the hour appointed for dinner; punctual to which, an East India Director, of immense wealth, in a waistcoat apparently constructed in serviceable deal by some plain carpenter, but really engendered in the tailor's art, and composed of the material called nankeen, arrived, and was received by Mr. Dombey alone. The next stage of the proceedings was Mr. Dombey's sending his compliments to Mr. Dombey, with as



correct statement of the time; and the next, the East India Director's falling prostrate, in a conversational point of view, and, as Mr. Dombey was not the man to pick him up, staring at the fire until rescue appeared, in the shape of Mrs. Skewton; whom the Director, as a pleasant start in life for the evening, mistook for Mrs. Dombey, and greeted with enthusiasm.

The next arrival was a Bank Director, reputed to be able to buy up anything—human Nature generally, if he should take it in his head to influence the money market in that direction—but who was a wonderfully modest spoken man, almost boastfully so, and mentioned his “little place” at Kingston-upon-Thames, and its just being barely equal to giving Dombey a bed and a chop, if he would come and visit it. Ladies, he said, it was not for a man who lived in his quiet way to take upon himself to invite—but if Mrs. Skewton and her daughter, Mrs. Dombey, should ever find themselves in that direction, and would do him the honour to look at a little bit of a shrubbery they would find there, and a poor little flower-bed or so, and a humble apology for a pinery, and two or three little attempts of that sort without any pretension, they would distinguish him very much. Carrying out his character, this gentleman was very plainly dressed, in a wisp of cambric for a neckcloth, big shoes, a coat that was too loose for him, and a pair of trowsers that were too spare; and mention being made of the Opera by Mrs. Skewton, he said he very seldom went there, for he couldn't afford it. It seemed greatly to delight and exhilarate him to say so; and he beamed on his audience afterwards, with his hands in his pockets, and excessive satisfaction twinkling in his eyes.

Now Mrs. Dombey appeared, beautiful and proud, and as disdainful and defiant of them all as if the bridal wreath upon her head had been a garland of steel spikes put on to force concession from her which she would die sooner than yield. With her was Florence. When they entered together, the shadow of the night of the return again darkened Mr. Dombey's face. But unobserved; for Florence did not venture to raise her eyes to his, and Edith's indifference was too supreme to take the least heed of him.

The arrivals quickly became numerous. More directors, chairmen of public companies, elderly ladies carrying burdens on their heads for full dress, Cousin Feenix, Major Bagstock, friends of Mrs. Skewton, with the same bright bloom on their complexion, and very precious necklaces on very withered necks. Among these, a young lady of sixty-five, remarkably coolly dressed as to her back and shoulders, who spoke with an engaging lisp, and whose eyelids wouldn't keep up well, without a great deal of trouble on her part, and whose manners had that indefinable charm which so frequently attaches to the giddiness of youth. As the greater part of Mr. Dombey's list were disposed to be taciturn, and the greater part of Mrs. Dombey's list were disposed to be talkative, and there was no sympathy between them, Mrs. Dombey's list, by magnetic agreement, entered into a bond of union against Mr. Dombey's list, who, wandering about the rooms in a desolate manner, or seeking refuge in corners, entangled themselves with company coming in, and became barricaded behind sofas, and had doors opened smartly from without against their heads, and underwent every sort of discomfort.

When dinner was announced, Mr. Dombey took down an old lady like

a crimson velvet pincushion stuffed with bank notes, who might have been the identical old lady of Threadneedle-street, she was so rich, and looked so unaccommodating; Cousin Feenix took down Mrs. Dombey; Major Bagstock took down Mrs. Skewton; the young thing with the shoulders was bestowed, as an extinguisher, upon the East India Director; and the remaining ladies were left on view in the drawing-room by the remaining gentlemen, until a forlorn hope volunteered to conduct them down stairs, and those brave spirits with their captives blocked up the dining-room door, shutting out seven mild men in the stony-hearted hall. When all the rest were got in and were seated, one of these mild men still appeared, in smiling confusion, totally destitute and unprovided for, and, escorted by the butler, made the complete circuit of the table twice before his chair could be found, which it finally was, on Mrs. Dombey's left hand; after which the mild man never held up his head again.

Now, the spacious dining-room, with the company seated round the glittering table, busy with their glittering spoons, and knives and forks, and plates, might have been taken for a grown-up exposition of Tom Tiddler's ground, where children pick up gold and silver. Mr. Dombey, as Tiddler, looked his character to admiration; and the long plateau of precious metal frosted, separating him from Mrs. Dombey, whereon frosted Cupids offered scentless flowers to each of them, was allegorical to see.

Cousin Feenix was in great force, and looked astonishingly young. But he was sometimes thoughtless in his good humour—his memory occasionally wandering like his legs—and on this occasion caused the company to shudder. It happened thus. The young lady with the back, who regarded Cousin Feenix with sentiments of tenderness, had entrapped the East India Director into leading her to the chair next him; in return for which good office, she immediately abandoned the Director, who being shaded on the other side by a gloomy black velvet hat surmounting a bony and speechless female with a fan, yielded to a depression of spirits and withdrew into himself. Cousin Feenix and the young lady were very lively and humorous, and the young lady laughed so much at something Cousin Feenix related to her, that Major Bagstock begged leave to inquire on behalf of Mrs. Skewton (they were sitting opposite, a little lower down), whether that might not be considered public property.

"Why, upon my life," said Cousin Feenix, "there's nothing in it; it really is not worth repeating: in point of fact, it's merely an anecdote of Jack Adams. I dare say my friend Dombey;" for the general attention was concentrated on Cousin Feenix; "may remember Jack Adam's, Jack Adams, not Joe; that was his brother. Jack—little Jack—man with a cast in his eye, and a slight impediment in his speech—man who sat for somebody's borough. We used to call him in my parliamentary time W. P. Adams, in consequence of his being Warming Pan for a young fellow who was in his minority. Perhaps my friend Dombey may have known the man?"

Mr. Dombey, who was as likely to have known Guy Fawkes, replied in the negative. But one of the seven mild men unexpectedly leaped into distinction, by saying *he* had known him, and adding—"always wore Hessian boots!"

"Exactly," said Cousin Feenix, bending forward to see the mild man, and smile encouragement at him down the table. "That was Jack. Joe wore—"



"Tops!" cried the mild man, rising in public estimation every instant.

"Of course," said Cousin Feenix, "you were intimate with 'em?"

"I knew them both," said the mild man. With whom Mr. Dombey immediately took wine.

"Devilish good fellow, Jack?" said Cousin Feenix, again bending forward, and smiling.

"Excellent," returned the mild man, becoming bold on his success.

"One of the best fellows I ever knew."

"No doubt you have heard the story?" said Cousin Feenix.

"I shall know," replied the bold mild man, "when I have heard your Ludship tell it." With that, he leaned back in his chair and smiled at the ceiling, as knowing it by heart, and being already tickled.

"In point of fact, it's nothing of a story in itself," said Cousin Feenix, addressing the table with a smile, and a gay shake of his head, "and not worth a word of preface. But it's illustrative of the neatness of Jack's humour. The fact is, that Jack was invited down to a marriage—which I think took place in Barkshire?"

"Shropshire," said the bold mild man, finding himself appealed to.

"Was it? well! In point of fact it might have been in any shire," said Cousin Feenix. "So, my friend being invited down to this marriage in Anyshire," with a pleasant sense of the readiness of this joke, "goes. Just as some of us, having had the honour of being invited to the marriage of my lovely and accomplished relative with my friend Dombey, didn't require to be asked twice, and were devilish glad to be present on so interesting an occasion.—Goes—Jack goes. Now, this marriage was, in point of fact, the marriage of an uncommonly fine girl with a man for whom she didn't care a button, but whom she accepted on account of his property, which was immense. When Jack returned to town, after the nuptials, a man he knew, meeting him in the lobby of the House of Commons says, 'Well Jack, how are the ill-matched couple?' 'Ill-matched,' says Jack. 'Not at all. It's a perfectly fair and equal transaction. *She* is regularly bought, and you may take your oath *he* is as regularly sold!'"

In his full enjoyment of this culminating point of his story the shudder, which had gone all round the table like an electric spark, struck Cousin Feenix, and he stopped. Not a smile occasioned by the only general topic of conversation broached that day, appeared on any face. A profound silence ensued; and the wretched mild man, who had been as innocent of any real foreknowledge of the story as the child unborn, had the exquisite misery of reading in every eye that he was regarded as the prime mover of the mischief.

Mr. Dombey's face was not a changeful one, and being cast in its mould of state that day, showed little other apprehension of the story, if any, than that which he expressed when he said solemnly, amidst the silence, that it was "Very good." There was a rapid glance from Edith towards Florence, but otherwise she remained, externally, impassive and unconscious.

Through the various stages of rich meats and wines, continual gold and silver, dainties of earth, air, fire, and water, heaped-up fruits, and that unnecessary article in Mr. Dombey's banquets—ice—the dinner slowly made its way: the later stages being achieved to the sonorous music of incessant double knocks, announcing the arrival of visitors, whose portion of the feast was limited to the smell thereof. When Mrs. Dombey rose,

it was a sight to see her lord, with stiff throat and erect head, hold the door open for the withdrawal of the ladies; and to see how she swept past him with his daughter on her arm.

Mr. Dombey was a grave sight, behind the decanters, in a state of dignity; and the East India Director was a forlorn sight near the unoccupied end of the table, in a state of solitude; and the Major was a military sight, relating stories of the Duke of York to six of the seven mild men (the ambitious one was utterly quenched); and the Bank Director was a lowly sight, making a plan of his little attempt at a pinery, with dessert-knives, for a group of admirers; and Cousin Feenix was a thoughtful sight, as he smoothed his long wristbands and stealthily adjusted his wig. But all these sights were of short duration, being speedily broken up by coffee, and the desertion of the room.

There was a throng in the state-rooms up-stairs, increasing every minute; but still Mr. Dombey's list of visitors appeared to have some native impossibility of amalgamation with Mrs. Dombey's list, and no one could have doubted which was which. The single exception to this rule perhaps was Mr. Carker, who now smiled among the company, and who, as he stood in the circle that was gathered about Mrs. Dombey—watchful of her, of them, his chief, Cleopatra and the Major, Florence, and everything around—appeared at ease with both divisions of guests, and not marked as exclusively belonging to either.

Florence had a dread of him, which made his presence in the room a nightmare to her. She could not avoid the recollection of it, for her eyes were drawn towards him every now and then, by an attraction of dislike and distrust that she could not resist. Yet her thoughts were busy with other things; for as she sat apart—not unadmired or unsought, but in the gentleness of her quiet spirit—she felt how little part her father had in what was going on, and saw, with pain, how ill at ease he seemed to be, and how little regarded he was as he lingered about near the door, for those visitors whom he wished to distinguish with particular attention, and took them up to introduce them to his wife, who received them with proud coldness, but showed no interest or wish to please, and never, after the bare ceremony of reception, in consultation of his wishes, or in welcome of his friends, opened her lips. It was not the less perplexing or painful to Florence, that she who acted thus, treated her so kindly and with such loving consideration, that it almost seemed an ungrateful return on her part even to know of what was passing before her eyes.

Happy Florence would have been, might she have ventured to bear her father company, by so much as a look; and happy Florence was, in little suspecting the main cause of his uneasiness. But afraid of seeming to know that he was placed at any disadvantage, lest he should be resentful of that knowledge; and divided between her impulse towards him, and her grateful affection for Edith; she scarcely dared to raise her eyes towards either. Anxious and unhappy for them both, the thought stole on her through the crowd, that it might have been better for them if this noise of tongues and tread of feet had never come there,—if the old dullness and decay had never been replaced by novelty and splendour,—if the neglected child had found no friend in Edith, but had lived her solitary life, unpitied and forgotten.

Mrs. Chick had some such thoughts too, but they were not so quietly



developed in her mind. This good matron had been outraged in the first instance by not receiving an invitation to dinner. That blow partially recovered, she had gone to a vast expense to make such a figure before Mrs. Dombey at home, as should dazzle the senses of that lady, and heap mortification, mountains high, on the head of Mrs. Skewton.

"But I am made," said Mrs. Chick to Mr. Chick, "of no more account than Florence! Who takes the smallest notice of me? No one!"

"No one, my dear," assented Mr. Chick, who was seated by the side of Mrs. Chick against the wall, and could console himself, even there, by softly whistling.

"Does it at all appear as if I was wanted here?" exclaimed Mrs. Chick, with flashing eyes.

"No my dear, I don't think it does," said Mr. Chick.

"Paul's mad!" said Mrs. Chick.

Mr. Chick whistled.

"Unless you are a monster, which I sometimes think you are," said Mrs. Chick with candour, "don't sit there humming tunes. How any one with the most distant feelings of a man, can see that mother-in-law of Paul's, dressed as she is, going on like that, with Major Bagstock, for whom, among other precious things, we are indebted to your Lucretia Tox—"

"My Lucretia Tox, my dear!" said Mr. Chick, astounded.

"Yes," retorted Mrs. Chick, with great severity, "*your* Lucretia Tox—I say how anybody can see that mother-in-law of Paul's, and that haughty wife of Paul's, and these indecent old frights with their backs and shoulders, and in short this at home generally, and hum—," on which word Mrs. Chick laid a scornful emphasis that made Mr. Chick start, "is, I thank Heaven, a mystery to me!"

Mr. Chick screwed his mouth into a form irreconcilable with humming or whistling, and looked very contemplative.

"But I hope I know what is due to myself," said Mrs. Chick, swelling with indignation, "though Paul has forgotten what is due to me. I am not going to sit here, a member of this family, to be taken no notice of. I am not the dirt under Mrs. Dombey's feet, yet—not quite yet," said Mrs. Chick, as if she expected to become so, about the day after to-morrow. "And I shall go. I will not say (whatever I may think) that this affair has been got up solely to degrade and insult me. I shall merely go. I shall not be missed!"

Mrs. Chick rose erect with these words, and took the arm of Mr. Chick, who escorted her from the room, after half an hour's shady sojourn there. And it is due to her penetration to observe that she certainly was not missed at all.

But she was not the only indignant guest; for Mr. Dombey's list (still constantly in difficulties) were, as a body, indignant with Mrs. Dombey's list, for looking at them through eye-glasses, and audibly wondering who all those people were; while Mrs. Dombey's list complained of weariness, and the young thing with the shoulders, deprived of the attentions of that gay youth Cousin Teenix (who went away from the dinner-table), confidentially alleged to thirty or forty friends that she was bored to death. All the old ladies with the burdens on their heads, had greater or less cause of complaint against Mrs. Dombey; and the Directors and Chairmen coincided in thinking that if Dombey must marry, he had better have

married somebody nearer his own age, not quite so handsome, and a little better off. The general opinion among this class of gentlemen was, that it was a weak thing in Dombey, and he'd live to repent it. Hardly anybody there, except the mild men, stayed, or went away, without considering himself or herself neglected and aggrieved by Mr. Dombey or Mrs. Dombey; and the speechless female in the black velvet hat was found to have been stricken mute, because the lady in the crimson velvet had been handed down before her. The nature even of the mild men got corrupted, either from their curdling it with too much lemonade, or from the general inoculation that prevailed; and they made sarcastic jokes to one another, and whispered disparagement on stairs and in bye-places. The general dissatisfaction and discomfort so diffused itself, that the assembled footmen in the hall were as well acquainted with it as the company above. Nay, the very linkmen outside got hold of it, and compared the party to a funeral out of mourning, with none of the company remembered in the will.

At last, the guests were all gone, and the linkmen too; and the street, crowded so long with carriages, was clear; and the dying lights showed no one in the rooms, but Mr. Dombey and Mr. Carker, who were talking together apart, and Mrs. Dombey and her mother: the former seated on an ottoman; the latter reclining in the Cleopatra attitude, awaiting the arrival of her maid. Mr. Dombey having finished his communication to Carker, the latter advanced obsequiously to take leave.

"I trust," he said, "that the fatigues of this delightful evening will not inconvenience Mrs. Dombey to-morrow."

"Mrs. Dombey," said Mr. Dombey, advancing, "has sufficiently spared herself fatigue, to relieve you from any anxiety of that kind. I regret to say, Mrs. Dombey, that I could have wished you had fatigued yourself a little more on this occasion."

She looked at him with a supercilious glance, that it seemed not worth her while to protract, and turned away her eyes without speaking.

"I am sorry, Madam," said Mr. Dombey, "that you should not have thought it your duty—"

She looked at him again.

"Your duty, Madam," pursued Mr. Dombey, "to have received my friends with a little more deference. Some of those whom you have been pleased to slight to-night in a very marked manner, Mrs. Dombey, confer a distinction upon you, I must tell you, in any visit they pay you."

"Do you know that there is some one here?" she returned, now looking at him steadily.

"No! Carker! I beg that you do not. I insist that you do not," cried Mr. Dombey, stopping that noiseless gentleman in his withdrawal. "Mr. Carker, Madam, as you know, possesses my confidence. He is as well acquainted as myself with the subject on which I speak. I beg to tell you, for your information, Mrs. Dombey, that I consider these wealthy and important persons confer a distinction upon *me*." and Mr. Dombey drew himself up, as having now rendered them of the highest possible importance.

"I ask you," she repeated, bending her disdainful, steady gaze upon him, "do you know that there is some one here, Sir?"

"I must entreat," said Mr. Carker, stepping forward, "I must beg, I



must demand, to be released. Slight and unimportant as this difference is—”

Mrs. Skewton, who had been intent upon her daughter's face, took him up here.

“My sweetest Edith,” she said, “and my dearest Dombey; our excellent friend Mr. Carker, for so I am sure I ought to mention him—”

Mr. Carker murmured, “Too much honour.”

“—has used the very words that were in my mind, and that I have been dying, these ages, for an opportunity of introducing. Slight and unimportant! My sweetest Edith, and my dearest Dombey, do we not know that any difference between you two—No, Flowers; not now.”

Flowers was the maid, who, finding gentlemen present, retreated with precipitation.

“That any difference between you two,” resumed Mrs. Skewton, “with the Heart you possess in common, and the excessively charming bond of feeling that there is between you, *must* be slight and unimportant? What words could better define the fact? None. Therefore I am glad to take this slight occasion—this trifling occasion, that is so replete with Nature, and your individual characters, and all that—so truly calculated to bring the tears into a parent's eyes—to say that I attach no importance to them in the least, except as developing these minor elements of Soul; and that, unlike most mamas-in-law (that odious phrase, dear Dombey!) as they have been represented to me to exist in this I fear too artificial world, I never shall attempt to interpose between you, at such a time, and never can much regret, after all, such little flashes of the torch of What's-his-name—not Cupid, but the other delightful creature.”

There was a sharpness in the good mother's glance at both her children as she spoke, that may have been expressive of a direct and well-considered purpose hidden between these rambling words. That purpose, providently to detach herself in the beginning from all the clankings of their chain that were to come, and to shelter herself with the fiction of her innocent belief in their mutual affection, and their adaptation to each other.

“I have pointed out to Mrs. Dombey,” said Mr. Dombey, in his most stately manner, “that in her conduct thus early in our married life, to which I object, and which, I request, may be corrected. Carker,” with a nod of dismissal, “good night to you!”

Mr. Carker bowed to the imperious form of the Bride, whose sparkling eye was fixed upon her husband; and stopping at Cleopatra's couch on his way out, raised to his lips the hand she graciously extended to him, in lowly and admiring homage.

If his handsome wife had reproached him, or even changed countenance, or broken the silence in which she remained, by one word, now that they were alone (for Cleopatra made off with all speed), Mr. Dombey would have been equal to some assertion of his case against her. But the intense, unutterable, withering scorn, with which, after looking upon him, she dropped her eyes as if he were too worthless and indifferent to her to be challenged with a syllable—the ineffable disdain and haughtiness in which she sat before him—the cold inflexible resolve with which her every feature seemed to bear him down, and put him by—he had no resource

against; and he left her, with her whole overbearing beauty concentrated on despising him.

Was he coward enough to watch her, an hour afterwards, on the old well staircase, where he had once seen Florence in the moonlight, toiling up with Paul? Or was he in the dark by accident, when, looking up, he saw her coming, with a light, from the room where Florence lay, and marked again the face so changed, which *he* could not subdue?

But it could never alter as his own did. It never, in its utmost pride and passion, knew the shadow that had fallen on his, in the dark corner, on the night of the return; and often since; and which deepened on it now, as he looked up.

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## CHAPTER XXXVII.

### MORE WARNINGS THAN ONE.

FLORENCE, Edith, and Mrs. Skewton, were together next day, and the carriage was waiting at the door to take them out. For Cleopatra had her galley again now, and Withers, no longer the wan, stood upright in a pigeon-breasted jacket and military trowsers, behind her wheel-less chair at dinner time, and butted no more. The hair of Withers was radiant with pomatum, in these days of down, and he wore kid gloves and smelt of the water of Cologne.

They were assembled in Cleopatra's room. The Serpent of old Nile (not to mention her disrespectfully) was reposing on her sofa sipping her morning chocolate at three o'clock in the afternoon, and Flowers the Maid was fastening on her youthful cuffs and frills, and performing a kind of private coronation ceremony on her, with a peach-coloured velvet bonnet; the artificial roses in which nodded to uncommon advantage, as the palsy trifled with them, like a breeze.

"I think I am a little nervous this morning, Flowers," said Mrs. Skewton. "My hand quite shakes."

"You were the life of the party last night, Ma'am, you know," returned Flowers, "and you suffer for it to-day, you see."

Edith, who had beckoned Florence to the window, and was looking out, with her back turned on the toilet of her esteemed mother, suddenly withdrew from it, as if it had lightened.

"My darling child," cried Cleopatra, languidly, "*you* are not nervous? Don't tell me, my dear Edith, that you, so enviably self-possessed, are beginning to be a martyr too, like your unfortunately constituted mother! Withers, some one at the door."

"Card Ma'am," said Withers, taking it towards Mrs. Dombey.

"I am going out," she said, without looking at it.

"My dear love," drawled Mrs. Skewton, "how very odd to send that message without seeing the name! Bring it here, Withers. Dear me, my love; Mr. Carker too! That very sensible person!"

"I am going out," repeated Edith, in so imperious a tone that Withers, going to the door, imperiously informed the servant who was



waiting, "Mrs. Dombey is going out. Get along with you," and shut it on him.

But the servant came back after a short absence, and whispered to Withers again, who once more, and not very willingly, presented himself before Mrs. Dombey.

"If you please, Ma'am, Mr. Carker sends his respectful compliments, and begs you would spare him one minute, if you could—for business, Ma'am, if you please."

"Really, my love," said Mrs. Skewton in her mildest manner; for her daughter's face was threatening; "if you would allow me to offer a word, I should recommend—"

"Show him this way," said Edith. As Withers disappeared to execute the command, she added, frowning on her mother, "As he comes at your recommendation, let him come to your room."

"May I—shall I go away?" asked Florence, hurriedly.

Edith nodded yes, but on her way to the door Florence met the visitor coming in. With the same disagreeable mixture of familiarity and forbearance, with which he had first addressed her, he addressed her now in his softest manner—hoped she was quite well—needed not to ask, with such looks to anticipate the answer—had scarcely had the honour to know her, last night, she was so greatly changed—and held the door open for her to pass out; with a secret sense of power in her shrinking from him, that all the deference and politeness of his manner could not quite conceal.

He then bowed himself for a moment over Mrs. Skewton's condescending hand, and lastly bowed to Edith. Coldly returning his salute without looking at him, and neither seating herself nor inviting him to be seated, she waited for him to speak.

Entrenched in her pride and power, and with all the obduracy of her spirit summoned about her, still her old conviction that she and her mother had been known by this man in their worst colours, from their first acquaintance; that every degradation she had suffered in her own eyes was as plain to him as to herself; that he read her life as though it were a vile book, and fluttered the leaves before her in slight looks and tones of voice which no one else could detect; weakened and undermined her. Proudly as she opposed herself to him, with her commanding face exacting his humility, her disdainful lip repulsing him, her bosom angry at his intrusion, and the dark lashes of her eyes sullenly veiling their light, that no ray of it might shine upon him—and submissively as he stood before her, with an entreating injured manner, but with complete submission to her will—she knew, in her own soul, that the cases were reversed, and that the triumph and superiority were his, and that he knew it full well.

"I have presumed," said Mr. Carker, "to solicit an interview, and I have ventured to describe it as being one of business, because—"

"Perhaps you are charged by Mr. Dombey with some message of reproof," said Edith. "You possess Mr. Dombey's confidence in such an unusual degree, Sir, that you would scarcely surprise me if that were your business."

"I have no message to the lady who sheds a lustre upon his name,"

said Mr. Carker. "But I entreat that lady, on my own behalf, to be just to a very humble claimant for justice at her hands—a mere dependant of Mr. Dombey's—which is a position of humility; and to reflect upon my perfect helplessness last night, and the impossibility of my avoiding the share that was forced upon me in a very painful occasion."

"My dearest Edith," hinted Cleopatra in a low voice, as she held her eye-glass aside, "really very charming of Mr. What's-his-name. And full of heart!"

"For I do," said Mr. Carker, appealing to Mrs. Skewton with a look of grateful deference,—“I do venture to call it a painful occasion, though merely because it was so to me, who had the misfortune to be present. So slight a difference, as between the principals—between those who love each other with disinterested devotion, and would make any sacrifice of self, in such a cause—is nothing. As Mrs. Skewton herself expressed, with so much truth and feeling last night, it is nothing.”

Edith could not look at him, but she said after a few moments,

"And your business, Sir—"

"Edith, my pet," said Mrs. Skewton, "all this time, Mr. Carker is standing! My dear Mr. Carker, take a seat, I beg."

He offered no reply to the mother, but fixed his eyes on the proud daughter, as though he would only be bidden by her, and was resolved to be bidden by her. Edith, in spite of herself, sat down, and slightly motioned with her hand to him to be seated too. No action could be colder, haughtier, more insolent in its air of supremacy and disrespect, but she had struggled against even that concession ineffectually, and it was wrested from her. That was enough! Mr. Carker sat down.

"May I be allowed, Madam," said Carker, turning his white teeth on Mrs. Skewton like a light—"a lady of your excellent sense and quick feeling will give me credit, for good reason, I am sure—to address what I have to say, to Mrs. Dombey, and to leave her to impart it to you who are her best and dearest friend—next to Mr. Dombey?"

Mrs. Skewton would have retired, but Edith stopped her. Edith would have stopped him too, and indignantly ordered him to speak openly or not at all, but that he said, in a low voice—"Miss Florence—the young lady who has just left the room—"

Edith suffered him to proceed. She looked at him now. As he bent forward, to be nearer, with the utmost show of delicacy and respect, and with his teeth persuasively arrayed, in a self-depreciating smile, she felt as if she could have struck him dead.

"Miss Florence's position," he began, "has been an unfortunate one. I have a difficulty in alluding to it to you, whose attachment to her father is naturally watchful and jealous of every word that applies to him." Always distinct and soft in speech, no language could describe the extent of his distinctness and softness, when he said these words, or came to any others of a similar import. "But, as one who is devoted to Mr. Dombey in his different way, and whose life is passed in admiration of Mr. Dombey's character, may I say, without offence to your tenderness as a wife, that Miss Florence has unhappily been neglected—by her father. May I say by her father?"

Edith replied, "I know it."



"You know it!" said Mr. Carker, with a great appearance of relief. "It removes a mountain from my breast. May I hope you know how the neglect originated; in what an amiable phase of Mr. Dombey's pride—character, I mean?"

"You may pass that by, Sir," she returned, "and come the sooner to the end of what you have to say."

"Indeed, I am sensible, Madam," replied Carker,—"trust me, I am deeply sensible, that Mr. Dombey can require no justification in anything to you. But, kindly judge of my breast by your own, and you will forgive my interest in him, if, in its excess, it goes at all astray."

What a stab to her proud heart, to sit there, face to face with him, and have him tendering her false oath at the altar again and again for her acceptance, and pressing it upon her, like the dregs of a sickening cup she could not own her loathing of, or turn away from! How shame, remorse, and passion raged within her, when, upright and majestic in her beauty before him, she knew that in her spirit she was down at his feet!

"Miss Florence," said Carker, "left to the care—if one may call it care—of servants and mercenary people, in every way her inferiors, necessarily wanted some guide and compass in her younger days, and, naturally, for want of them, has been indiscreet, and has in some degree forgotten her station. There was some folly about one Walter, a common lad, who is fortunately dead now: and some very undesirable association, I regret to say, with certain coasting sailors, of anything but good repute, and a runaway old bankrupt."

"I have heard the circumstances, Sir," said Edith, flashing her disdainful glance upon him, "and I know that you pervert them. You may not know it. I hope so."

"Pardon me," said Mr. Carker. "I believe that nobody knows them so well as I. Your generous and ardent nature, Madam—the same nature which is so nobly imperative in vindication of your beloved and honoured husband, and which has blessed him as even his merits deserve—I must respect, defer to, bow before. But, as regards the circumstances, which is indeed the business I presumed to solicit your attention to, I can have no doubt, since, in the execution of my trust as Mr. Dombey's confidential—I presume to say—friend, I have fully ascertained them. In my execution of that trust; in my deep concern, which you can so well understand, for everything relating to him, intensified, if you will (for I fear I labour under your displeasure), by the lower motive of desire to prove my diligence, and make myself the more acceptable; I have long pursued these circumstances by myself and trustworthy instruments, and have innumerable and most minute proofs."

She raised her eyes no higher than his mouth, but she saw the means of mischief vaunted in every tooth it contained.

"Pardon me, Madam," he continued, "if, in my perplexity, I presume to take counsel with you, and to consult your pleasure. I think I have observed that you are greatly interested in Miss Florence?"

What was there in her he had not observed, and did not know? Humbled and yet maddened by the thought, in every new presentment of it, however faint, she pressed her teeth upon her quivering lip to force composure on it, and distantly inclined her head in reply.

"This interest, Madam—so touching an evidence of everything asso-

ciated with Mr. Dombey being dear to you—induces me to pause, before I make him acquainted with these circumstances, which, as yet, he does not know. It so far shakes me, if I may make the confession, in my allegiance, that on the intimation of the least desire to that effect from you, I would suppress them.”

Edith raised her head quickly, and starting back, bent her dark glance upon him. He met it with his blandest and most deferential smile, and went on.

“You say that as I describe them, they are perverted. I fear not—I fear not: but let us assume that they are. The uneasiness I have for sometime felt on the subject, arises in this: that the mere circumstance of such association, often repeated, on the part of Miss Florence, however innocently and confidingly, would be conclusive with Mr. Dombey, already predisposed against her, and would lead him to take some step (I know he has occasionally contemplated it) of separation and alienation of her from his home. Madam, bear with me, and remember my intercourse with Mr. Dombey, and my knowledge of him, and my reverence for him, almost from childhood, when I say that if he has a fault, it is a lofty stubbornness, rooted in that noble pride and sense of power which belong to him, and which we must all defer to; which is not assailable like the obstinacy of other characters; and which grows upon itself from day to day, and year to year.”

She bent her glance upon him still; but, look as steadfast as she would, her haughty nostrils dilated, and her breath came somewhat deeper, and her lip would slightly curl, as he described that in his patron to which they must all bow down. He saw it; and though his expression did not change, she knew he saw it.

“Even so slight an incident as last night’s,” he said, “if I might refer to it once more, would serve to illustrate my meaning, better than a greater one. Dombey and Son know neither time, nor place, nor season, but bear them all down. But I rejoice in its occurrence, for it has opened the way for me to approach Mrs. Dombey with this subject to-day, even if it has entailed upon me the penalty of her temporary displeasure. Madam, in the midst of my uneasiness and apprehension on this subject, I was summoned by Mr. Dombey to Leamington. There I saw you. There I could not help knowing what relation you would shortly occupy towards him—to his enduring happiness and yours. There I resolved to await the time of your establishment at home here, and to do as I have now done. I have, at heart, no fear that I shall be wanting in my duty to Mr. Dombey, if I bury what I know in your breast; for where there is but one heart and mind between two persons—as in such a marriage—one almost represents the other. I can acquit my conscience therefore, almost equally, by confidence, on such a theme, in you or him. For the reasons I have mentioned, I would select you. May I aspire to the distinction of believing that my confidence is accepted, and that I am relieved from my responsibility?”

He long remembered the look she gave him—who could see it, and forget it?—and the struggle that ensued within her. At last, she said:

“I accept it, Sir. You will please to consider this matter at an end, and that it goes no farther.”



He bowed low, and rose. She rose too, and he took leave with all humility. But Withers, meeting him on the stairs, stood amazed at the beauty of his teeth, and at his brilliant smile; and as he rode away upon his white-legged horse, the people took him for a dentist, such was the dazzling show he made. The people took *her*, when she rode out in her carriage presently, for a great lady, as happy as she was rich and fine. But they had not seen her, just before, in her own room with no one by; and they had not heard her utterance of the three words, "Oh Florence, Florence!"

Mrs. Skewton, reposing on her sofa, and sipping her chocolate, had heard nothing but the low word business, for which she had a mortal aversion, inasmuch that she had long banished it from her vocabulary, and had gone nigh, in a charming manner and with an immense amount of heart, to say nothing of soul, to ruin divers milliners and others in consequence. Therefore Mrs. Skewton asked no questions, and showed no curiosity. Indeed, the peach-velvet bonnet gave her sufficient occupation out of doors; for being perched on the back of her head, and the day being rather windy, it was frantic to escape from Mrs. Skewton's company, and would be coaxed into no sort of compromise. When the carriage was closed, and the wind shut out, the palsy played among the artificial roses again like an alms-house-full of superannuated zephyrs; and altogether Mrs. Skewton had enough to do, and got on but indifferently.

She got on no better towards night; for when Mrs. Dombey, in her dressing-room, had been dressed and waiting for her half an hour, and Mr. Dombey, in the drawing-room, had paraded himself into a state of solemn fretfulness (they were all three going out to dinner), Flowers the Maid appeared with a pale face to Mrs. Dombey, saying:

"If you please, Ma'am, I beg your pardon, but I can't do nothing with Missis!"

"What do you mean?" asked Edith.

"Well, Ma'am," replied the frightened maid, "I hardly know. She's making faces!"

Edith hurried with her to her mother's room. Cleopatra was arrayed in full dress, with the diamonds, short-sleeves, rouge, curls, teeth, and other juvenility all complete; but Paralysis was not to be deceived, had known her for the object of its errand, and had struck her at her glass, where she lay like a horrible doll that had tumbled down.

They took her to pieces in very shame, and put the little of her that was real on a bed. Doctors were sent for, and soon came. Powerful remedies were resorted to; opinions given that she would rally from this shock, but would not survive another; and there she lay speechless, and staring at the ceiling, for days: sometimes making inarticulate sounds in answer to such questions as did she know who were present, and the like: sometimes giving no reply either by sign or gesture, or in her unwinking eyes.

At length she began to recover consciousness, and in some degree the power of motion, though not yet of speech. One day the use of her right hand returned; and showing it to her maid who was in attendance on her, and appearing very uneasy in her mind, she made signs for a pencil and some paper. This the maid immediately provided, thinking she was going to make a will, or write some last request; and Mrs. Dombey being from home, the maid awaited the result with solemn feelings.

After much painful scrawling and erasing, and putting in of wrong

characters, which seemed to tumble out of the pencil of their own accord, the old woman produced this document :

“Rose-coloured curtains.”

The maid being perfectly transfixed, and with tolerable reason, Cleopatra amended the manuscript by adding two words more, when it stood thus :

“Rose-coloured curtains for doctors.”

The maid now perceived remotely that she wished these articles to be provided for the better presentation of her complexion to the faculty ; and as those in the house who knew her best, had no doubt of the correctness of this opinion, which she was soon able to establish for herself, the rose-coloured curtains were added to her bed, and she mended with increased rapidity from that hour. She was soon able to sit up, in curls and a laced cap and night-gown, and to have a little artificial bloom dropped into the hollow caverns of her cheeks.

It was a tremendous sight to see this old woman in her finery leering and mincing at Death, and playing off her youthful tricks upon him as if he had been the Major ; but an alteration in her mind that ensued on the paralytic stroke was fraught with as much matter for reflection, and was quite as ghastly.

Whether the weakening of her intellect made her more cunning and false than before, or whether it confused her between what she had assumed to be and what she really had been, or whether it had awakened any glimmering of remorse, which could neither struggle into light nor get back into total darkness, or whether, in the jumble of her faculties, a combination of these effects had been shaken up, which is perhaps the more likely supposition, the result was this :—That she became hugely exacting in respect of Edith’s affection and gratitude and attention to her ; highly laudatory of herself as a most inestimable parent ; and very jealous of having any rival in Edith’s regard. Further, in place of remembering that compact made between them for an avoidance of the subject, she constantly alluded to her daughter’s marriage as a proof of her being an incomparable mother ; and all this, with the weakness and peevishness of such a state, always serving for a sarcastic commentary on her levity and youthfulness.

“Where is Mrs. Dombey ? ” she would say to her maid.

“Gone out, Ma’am.”

“Gone out ! Does she go out to shun her mama, Flowers ? ”

“La bless you, no Ma’am. Mrs. Dombey has only gone out for a ride with Miss Florence.”

“Miss Florence. Who’s Miss Florence ? Don’t tell me about Miss Florence. What’s Miss Florence to her, compared to me ? ”

The apposite display of the diamonds, or the peach-velvet bonnet (she sat in the bonnet to receive visitors, weeks before she could stir out of doors), or the dressing of her up in some gaud or other, usually stopped the tears that began to flow hereabouts ; and she would remain in a complacent state until Edith came to see her ; when, at a glance of the proud face, she would relapse again.

“Well I am sure, Edith ! ” she would cry, shaking her head.

“What is the matter, mother ? ”

“Matter ! I really don’t know what *is* the matter. The world is coming to such an artificial and ungrateful state, that I begin to think



there's no Heart—or anything of that sort—left in it, positively. Withers is more a child to me than you are. He attends to me much more than my own daughter. I almost wish I didn't look so young—and all that kind of thing—and then perhaps I should be more considered."

"What would you have, mother?"

"Oh, a great deal, Edith," impatiently.

"Is there anything you want that you have not? It is your own fault if there be."

"My own fault!" beginning to whimper. "The parent I have been to you, Edith: making you a companion from your cradle! And when you neglect me, and have no more natural affection for me than if I was a stranger—not a twentieth part of the affection that you have for Florence—but I am only your mother and should corrupt *her* in a day!—you reproach me with its being my own fault."

"Mother, mother, I reproach you with nothing. Why will you always dwell on this?"

"Isn't it natural that I should dwell on this, when I am all affection and sensitiveness, and am wounded in the cruellest way, whenever you look at me?"

"I do not mean to wound you, mother. Have you no remembrance of what has been said between us? Let the Past rest."

"Yes, rest! And let gratitude to me, rest; and let affection for me, rest; and let *me* rest in my out-of-the-way-room, with no society and no attention, while you find new relations to make much of, who have no earthly claim upon you! Good gracious, Edith, do you know what an elegant establishment you are at the head of?"

"Yes. Hush!"

"And that gentlemanly creature, Dombey? do you know that you are married to him, Edith, and that you have a settlement, and a position, and a carriage, and I don't know what?"

"Indeed, I know it mother; well."

"As you would have had with that delightful good soul—what did they call him?—Granger—if he hadn't died. And who have you to thank for all this, Edith?"

"You, mother; you."

"Then put your arms round my neck, and kiss me; and show me, Edith, that you know there never was a better mama than I have been to you. And don't let me become a perfect fright with teasing and wearing myself at your ingratitude, or when I'm out again in society no soul will know me, not even that hateful animal, the Major."

But, sometimes, when Edith went nearer to her, and bending down her stately head, put her cold cheek to hers, the mother would draw back as if she were afraid of her, and would fall into a fit of trembling, and cry out that there was a wandering in her wits. And sometimes she would entreat her, with humility, to sit down on the chair beside her bed, and would look at her (as she sat there brooding) with a face that even the rose-coloured curtains could not make otherwise than scared and wild.

The rose-coloured curtains blushed, in course of time, on Cleopatra's bodily recovery, and on her dress—more juvenile than ever, to repair the ravages of illness—and on the rouge, and on the teeth, and on the curls, and on the diamonds, and the short sleeves, and the whole wardrobe of

the doll that had tumbled down before the mirror. They blushed too, now and then, upon an indistinctness in her speech, which she turned off with a girlish giggle, and on an occasional failing in her memory, that had no rule in it, but came and went fantastically; as if in mockery of her fantastic self.

But they never blushed upon a change in the new manner of her thought and speech towards her daughter. And though that daughter often came within their influence, they never blushed upon her loveliness irradiated by a smile, or softened by the light of filial love, in its stern beauty.

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## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

### MISS TOX IMPROVES AN OLD ACQUAINTANCE.

THE forlorn Miss Tox, abandoned by her friend Louisa Chick, and bereft of Mr. Dombey's countenance—for no delicate pair of wedding cards, united by a silver thread, graced the chimney-glass in Princess's Place, or the harpsichord, or any of those little posts of display which Lucretia reserved for holiday occupation—became depressed in her spirits, and suffered much from melancholy. For a time the Bird Waltz was unheard in Princess's Place, the plants were neglected, and dust collected on the miniature of Miss Tox's ancestor with the powdered head and pigtail.

Miss Tox, however, was not of an age or of a disposition long to abandon herself to unavailing regrets. Only two notes of the harpsichord were dumb from disuse when the Bird Waltz again warbled and trilled in the crooked drawing-room; only one slip of geranium fell a victim to imperfect nursing, before she was gardening at her green baskets again, regularly every morning; the powdered-headed ancestor had not been under a cloud for more than six weeks, when Miss Tox breathed on his benignant visage, and polished him up with a piece of wash-leather.

Still, Miss Tox was lonely, and at a loss. Her attachments, however ludicrously shewn, were real and strong; and she was, as she expressed it, "deeply hurt by the unmerited contumely she had met with from Louisa." But there was no such thing as anger in Miss Tox's composition. If she had ambled on, through life, in her soft-spoken way, without any opinions, she had, at least, got so far without any harsh passions. The mere sight of Louisa Chick in the street one day, at a considerable distance, so overpowered her milky nature, that she was fain to seek immediate refuge in a pastry-cook's, and there, in a musty little back room usually devoted to the consumption of soups, and pervaded by an ox-tail atmosphere, relieve her feelings by weeping plentifully.

Against Mr. Dombey Miss Tox hardly felt that she had any reason of complaint. Her sense of that gentleman's magnificence was such, that once removed from him, she felt as if her distance always had been immeasurable, and as if he had greatly condescended in tolerating her at all. No wife could be too handsome or too stately for him, according to Miss Tox's sincere opinion. It was perfectly natural that in looking for one, he should look high. Miss Tox with tears laid down this propo-



sition, and fully admitted it, twenty times a day. She never recalled the lofty manner in which Mr. Dombey had made her subservient to his convenience and caprices, and had graciously permitted her to be one of the nurses of his little son. She only thought, in her own words, "that she had passed a great many happy hours in that house, which she must ever remember with gratification, and that she could never cease to regard Mr. Dombey as one of the most impressive and dignified of men."

Cut off, however, from the implacable Louisa, and being shy of the Major (whom she viewed with some distrust now), Miss Tox found it very irksome to know nothing of what was going on in Mr. Dombey's establishment. And as she really had got into the habit of considering Dombey and Son as the pivot on which the world in general turned, she resolved, rather than be ignorant of intelligence which so strongly interested her, to cultivate her old acquaintance, Mrs. Richards, who she knew, since her last memorable appearance before Mr. Dombey, was in the habit of sometimes holding communication with his servants. Perhaps Miss Tox, in seeking out the Toodle family, had the tender motive hidden in her breast of having somebody to whom she could talk about Mr. Dombey, no matter how humble that somebody might be.

At all events, towards the Toodle habitation Miss Tox directed her steps one evening, what time Mr. Toodle, cindery and swart, was refreshing himself with tea, in the bosom of his family. Mr. Toodle had only three stages of existence. He was either taking refreshment in the bosom just mentioned, or he was tearing through the country at from twenty-five to fifty miles an hour, or he was sleeping after his fatigues. He was always in a whirlwind or a calm, and a peaceable contented easy-going man Mr. Toodle was in either state, who seemed to have made over all his own inheritance of fuming and fretting to the engines with which he was connected, which panted, and gasped, and chafed, and wore themselves out, in a most unsparing manner, while Mr. Toodle led a mild and equable life.

"Polly, my gal," said Mr. Toodle, with a young Toodle on each knee, and two more making tea for him, and plenty more scattered about—Mr. Toodle was never out of children, but always kept a good supply on hand—"You an't seen our Biler lately, have you?"

"No," replied Polly, "but he's almost certain to look in to-night. It's his right evening, and he's very regular."

"I suppose," said Mr. Toodle, relishing his meal infinitely, "as our Biler is a doin' now about as well as a boy *can* do, eh, Polly?"

"Oh! he's a doing beautiful!" responded Polly.

"He an't got to be at all secret-like—has he Polly?" inquired Mr. Toodle.

"No!" said Mrs. Toodle, plumply.

"I'm glad he an't got to be at all secret-like, Polly," observed Mr. Toodle in his slow and measured way, and shovelling in his bread and butter with a clasp-knife, as if he were stoking himself, "because that don't look well; do it, Polly?"

"Why, of course it don't, father. How can you ask!"

"You see, my boys and gals," said Mr. Toodle, looking round upon his family, "wotever you're up to in a honest way, it's my opinion as you can't do better than be open. If you find yourselves in cuttings or in

tunnels, don't you play no secret games. Keep your whistles going, and let 's know where you are."

The rising Toodles set up a shrill murmur, expressive of their resolution to profit by the paternal advice.

"But what makes you say this along of Rob, father?" asked his wife, anxiously.

"Polly, old 'ooman," said Mr. Toodle, "I don't know as I said it partickler along o' Rob, I'm sure. I starts light with Rob only; I comes to a branch; I takes on what I finds there; and a whole train of ideas gets coupled on to him, afore I knows where I am, or where they comes from. What a Junction a man's thoughts is," said Mr. Toodle, "to-be-sure!"

This profound reflection Mr. Toodle washed down with a pint mug of tea, and proceeded to solidify with a great weight of bread and butter; charging his young daughters, meanwhile, to keep plenty of hot water in the pot, as he was uncommon dry, and should take the indefinite quantity of "a sight of mugs," before his thirst was appeased.

In satisfying himself, however, Mr. Toodle was not regardless of the younger branches about him, who, although they had made their own evening repast, were on the look-out for irregular morsels, as possessing a relish. These he distributed now and then to the expectant circle, by holding out great wedges of bread and butter, to be bitten at by the family in lawful succession, and by serving out small doses of tea in like manner with a spoon; which snacks had such a relish in the mouths of these young Toodles, that, after partaking of the same, they performed private dances of ecstasy among themselves, and stood on one leg a-piece, and hopped, and indulged in other saltatory tokens of gladness. These vents for their excitement found, they gradually closed about Mr. Toodle again, and eyed him hard as he got through more bread and butter and tea; affecting, however, to have no further expectations of their own in reference to those viands, but to be conversing on foreign subjects, and whispering confidentially.

Mr. Toodle, in the midst of this family group, and setting an awful example to his children in the way of appetite, was conveying the two young Toodles on his knees to Birmingham by special engine, and was contemplating the rest over a barrier of bread and butter, when Rob the Grinder, in his sou'wester hat and mourning slops, presented himself, and was received with a general rush of brothers and sisters.

"Well, mother!" said Rob, dutifully kissing her; "how are you mother?"

"There's my boy!" cried Polly, giving him a hug, and a pat on the back. "Secret! Bless you father, not he!"

This was intended for Mr. Toodle's private edification, but Rob the Grinder, whose withers were not unwrung, caught the words as they were spoken.

"What! father's been a saying something more again me, has he?" cried the injured innocent. "Oh, what a hard thing it is that when a cove has once gone a little wrong, a cove's own father should be always a throwing it in his face behind his back! It's enough," cried Rob, resorting to his coat-cuff in anguish of spirit, "to make a cove go and do something, out of spite!"



"My poor boy!" cried Polly, "father didn't mean anything."

"If father didn't mean anything," blubbered the injured Grinder, "why did he go and say anything, mother? Nobody thinks half so bad of me as my own father does. What a unnatural thing! I wish somebody'd take and chop my head off. Father wouldn't mind doing it, I believe, and I'd much rather he did that than t' other."

At these desperate words all the young Toodles shrieked; a pathetic effect, which the Grinder improved by ironically adjuring them not to cry for him, for they ought to hate him, they ought, if they was good boys and girls; and this so touched the youngest Toodle but one, who was easily moved, that it touched him not only in his spirit but in his wind too; making him so purple that Mr. Toodle in consternation carried him out to the water-butt, and would have put him under the tap, but for his being recovered by the sight of that instrument.

Matters having reached this point, Mr. Toodle explained, and the virtuous feelings of his son being thereby calmed, they shook hands, and harmony reigned again.

"Will you do as I do, Biler, my boy?" inquired his father, returning to his tea with new strength.

"No, thank'ee, father. Master and I had tea together."

"And how *is* master, Rob?" said Polly.

"Well, I don't know, mother; not much to boast on. There ain't no bis'ness done, you see. He don't know anything about it—the Cap'en don't. There was a man come into the shop this very day, and says 'I want a so-and-so,' he says—some hard name or another. 'A which?' says the Cap'en. 'A so-and-so,' says the man. 'Brother,' says the Cap'en, 'will you take a observation round the shop?' 'Well,' says the man, 'I've done it.' 'Do you see wot you want?' says the Cap'en. 'No, I don't,' says the man. 'Do you know it wen you *do* see it?' says the Cap'en. 'No I don't,' says the man. 'Why, then I tell you wot, my lad,' says the Cap'en, 'you'd better go back and ask wot it's like, outside, for no more don't I!'"

"That an't the way to make money though, is it?" said Polly.

"Money, mother! He'll never make money. He has such ways as I never see. He an't a bad master though, I'll say that for him. But that an't much to me, for I don't think I shall stop with him long."

"Not stop in your place, Rob!" cried his mother; while Mr. Toodle opened his eyes.

"Not in that place p'raps," returned the Grinder, with a wink. "I shouldn't wonder—friends at court you know—but never *you* mind, mother, just now; I'm all right, that's all."

The indisputable proof afforded in these hints, and in the Grinder's mysterious manner, of his not being subject to that failing which Mr. Toodle had, by implication, attributed to him, might have led to a renewal of his wrongs, and of the sensation in the family, but for the opportune arrival of another visitor, who, to Polly's great surprise, appeared at the door, smiling patronage and friendship on all there.

"How do you do, Mrs. Richards?" said Miss Tox. "I have come to see you. May I come in?"

The cheery face of Mrs. Richards shone with a hospitable reply, and Miss Tox, accepting the proffered chair, and gracefully recognising Mr.

Toodle on her way to it, untied her bonnet strings, and said that in the first place she must beg the dear children, one and all, to come and kiss her.

The ill-starred youngest Toodle but one, who would appear, from the frequency of his domestic troubles, to have been born under an unlucky planet, was prevented from performing his part in this general salutation by having fixed the sou'wester hat (with which he had been previously trifling) deep on his head, hind side before, and being unable to get it off again; which accident presenting to his terrified imagination a dismal picture of his passing the rest of his days in darkness, and in hopeless seclusion from his friends and family, caused him to struggle with great violence, and to utter suffocated cries. Being released, his face was discovered to be very hot, and red, and damp; and Miss Tox took him on her lap, much exhausted.

"You have almost forgotten me, Sir, I dare say," said Miss Tox to Mr. Toodle.

"No, Ma'am, no," said Toodle. "But we've all on us got a little older since then."

"And how do you find yourself, Sir?" inquired Miss Tox, blandly.

"Hearty, Ma'am, thank'ee," replied Toodle. "How do *you* find *yourself*, Ma'am. Do the rheumaticks keep off pretty well, Ma'am? We must all expect to grow into 'em, as we gets on."

"Thank you," said Miss Tox. "I have not felt any inconvenience from that disorder yet."

"You're very fortunate, Ma'am," returned Mr. Toodle. "Many people at your time of life, Ma'am, is martyrs to it. There was my mother——" But catching his wife's eye here, Mr. Toodle judiciously buried the rest in another mug of tea.

"You never mean to say, Mrs. Richards," cried Miss Tox, looking at Rob, "that that is your——"

"Eldest, Ma'am," said Polly. "Yes, indeed it is. That's the little fellow, Ma'am, that was the innocent cause of so much."

"This here, Ma'am," said Toodle, "is him with the short legs—and they was," said Mr. Toodle, with a touch of poetry in his tone, "unusual short for leathers—as Mr. Dombey made a Grinder on."

The recollection almost overpowered Miss Tox. The subject of it had a peculiar interest for her directly. She asked him to shake hands, and congratulated his mother on his frank, ingenuous face. Rob, overhearing her, called up a look, to justify the eulogium, but it was hardly the right look.

"And now, Mrs. Richards," said Miss Tox,—“and you too, Sir,” addressing Toodle—“I'll tell you, plainly and truly, what I have come here for. You may be aware, Mrs. Richards—and, possibly, you may be aware too, Sir—that a little distance has interposed itself between me and some of my friends, and that where I used to visit a good deal, I do not visit now.”

Polly, who, with a woman's tact, understood this at once, expressed as much in a little look. Mr. Toodle, who had not the faintest idea of what Miss Tox was talking about, expressed that also, in a stare.

"Of course," said Miss Tox, "how our little coolness has arisen is of no moment, and does not require to be discussed. It is sufficient for me



to say, that I have the greatest possible respect for, and interest in, Mr. Dombey;" Miss Tox's voice faltered; "and everything that relates to him."

Mr. Toodle, enlightened, shook his head, and said he had heard it said, and, for his own part, he did think, as Mr. Dombey was a difficult subject.

"Pray don't say so, Sir, if you please," returned Miss Tox. "Let me entreat you not to say so, Sir, either now, or at any future time. Such observations cannot but be very painful to me, and to a gentleman, whose mind is constituted as, I am quite sure, yours is, can afford no permanent satisfaction."

Mr. Toodle, who had not entertained the least doubt of offering a remark that would be received with acquiescence, was greatly confounded.

"All that I wish to say, Mrs. Richards," resumed Miss Tox,—“and I address myself to you too, Sir,—is this. That any intelligence of the proceedings of the family, of the welfare of the family, of the health of the family, that reaches you, will be always most acceptable to me. That I shall be always very glad to chat with Mrs. Richards about the family, and about old times. And as Mrs. Richards and I never had the least difference (though I could wish now that we had been better acquainted, but I have no one but myself to blame for that), I hope she will not object to our being very good friends now, and to my coming backwards and forwards here, when I like, without being a stranger. Now, I really hope Mrs. Richards,” said Miss Tox, earnestly, “that you will take this, as I mean it, like a good-humoured creature, as you always were.”

Polly was gratified, and showed it. Mr. Toodle didn't know whether he was gratified or not, and preserved a stolid calmness.

"You see, Mrs. Richards," said Miss Tox—"and I hope you see too, Sir—there are many little ways in which I can be slightly useful to you, if you will make no stranger of me; and in which I shall be delighted to be so. For instance, I can teach your children something. I shall bring a few little books, if you'll allow me, and some work, and of an evening now and then, they'll learn—dear me, they'll learn a great deal, I trust, and be a credit to their teacher."

Mr. Toodle, who had a great respect for learning, jerked his head approvingly at his wife, and moistened his hands with dawning satisfaction.

"Then, not being a stranger, I shall be in nobody's way," said Miss Tox, "and everything will go on, just as if I were not here. Mrs. Richards will do her mending, or her ironing, or her nursing, whatever it is, without minding me; and you'll smoke your pipe, too, if you're so disposed, Sir, won't you?"

"Thank'ee Mum," said Mr. Toodle. "Yes; I'll take my bit of backer."

"Very good of you to say so, Sir," rejoined Miss Tox, "and I really do assure you now, unfeignedly, that it will be a great comfort to me, and that whatever good I may be fortunate enough to do the children, you will more than pay back to me, if you'll enter into this little bargain comfortably, and easily, and good-naturedly, without another word about it."

The bargain was ratified on the spot; and Miss Tox found herself so

much at home already, that without delay she instituted a preliminary examination of the children, all round—which Mr. Toodle much admired—and booked their ages, names, and acquirements, on a piece of paper. This ceremony, and a little attendant gossip, prolonged the time until after their usual hour of going to bed, and detained Miss Tox at the Toodle fireside until it was too late for her to walk home alone. The gallant Grinder, however, being still there, politely offered to attend her to her own door; and as it was something to Miss Tox to be seen home by a youth whom Mr. Dombey had first inducted into those manly garments which are rarely mentioned by name, she very readily accepted the proposal.

After shaking hands with Mr. Toodle and Polly, and kissing all the children, Miss Tox left the house, therefore, with unlimited popularity, and carrying away with her so light a heart that it might have given Mrs. Chick offence if that good lady could have weighed it.

Rob the Grinder, in his modesty, would have walked behind, but Miss Tox desired him to keep beside her, for conversational purposes; and, as she afterwards expressed it to his mother, “drew him out,” upon the road.

He drew out so bright, and clear, and shining, that Miss Tox was charmed with him. The more Miss Tox drew him out, the finer he came—like wire. There never was a better or more promising youth—a more affectionate, steady, prudent, sober, honest, meek, candid young man—than Rob drew out, that night.

“I am quite glad,” said Miss Tox, arrived at her own door, “to know you. I hope you’ll consider me your friend, and that you’ll come and see me as often as you like. Do you keep a money-box?”

“Yes Ma’am,” returned Rob; “I’m saving up, against I’ve got enough to put in the bank, Ma’am.”

“Very laudable indeed,” said Miss Tox. “I’m glad to hear it. Put this half-crown into it, if you please.”

“Oh thank you, Ma’am,” replied Rob, “but really I couldn’t think of depriving you.”

“I commend your independent spirit,” said Miss Tox, “but it’s no deprivation, I assure you. I shall be offended if you don’t take it, as a mark of my good will. Good night, Robin.”

“Good night, Ma’am,” said Rob, “and thank you!”

Who ran sniggering off to get change, and tossed it away with a pieman. But they never taught honour at the Grinders’ School, where the system that prevailed was particularly strong in the engendering of hypocrisy. Insomuch, that many of the friends and masters of past Grinders said, if this were what came of education for the common people, let us have none. Some more rational said, let us have a better one. But the governing powers of the Grinders’ Company were always ready for *them*, by picking out a few boys who had turned out well in spite of the system, and roundly asserting that they could have only turned out well because of it. Which settled the business of those objectors out of hand, and established the glory of the Grinders’ Institution.



## "QUESTION ! QUESTION ! QUESTION !"

IN the midst of the political turmoils and contests in which the Nation has recently been engaged, each party has endeavoured to impress its favourite opinions upon the public mind ; and has for this purpose employed the rallying cry of "Question ! Question ! Question !" Certainly, it is an important question how abuses may be best rectified, and the Constitution of the country so consolidated that the happiness of the entire body politic may be secured. To this end the Constitution should be carefully studied ; the precise character of the evils with which it is assailed should be ascertained ; and prompt and judicious measures should be adopted from time to time, that it may be freed from all adventitious appendages—from every thing likely to interfere injuriously with,—what may be termed without any abuse of language,—Constitutional Liberty.

Nor are these principles less sound when applied to the body natural, and the physical constitution of every individual. It is certain that the human system has been so constructed by a wise and gracious Providence, that all its operations may contribute to produce that state denominated HEALTH. It is no less certain that the enjoyment of this blessing depends upon the observance of certain plain and unalterable laws : let those laws be allowed to regulate, and health is secured ; let them be infringed, whether from ignorance, or with the vain idea of improving the constitution,—let their due operation be in any way impeded or obstructed—and *disease* and *pain* will be the sure result. We have intimated that if every individual were well instructed in the principles of the British Constitution, abuses would easily be detected and promptly rectified : so it is here ; if persons would study their own constitutions—would make themselves acquainted with the laws of their being,—a vast amount of suffering, and much loss of time and property would be avoided. Every irregular organic action by which we suffer pain, is caused by the retention of waste matter in the system which *ought* to have been carried off, and which *would* have been carried off but that the organs appointed for that office had become enervated by the infringement of Nature's laws, in other words, by taking cold, want of due exercise or rest, intemperance in eating or drinking, &c. Hence indigestion, complaints of the bowels and lungs, scorbutic affections, and all those bodily pains which "*flesh is heir to.*"

Now it is the duty of every individual to inquire into his own case. And we can encourage him to do so by assuring him that a REMEDY is at hand—a remedy as rational and philosophical as it is salutary and efficacious. WORSDELL'S VEGETABLE RESTORATIVE PILLS, prepared solely by JOHN KAYE, Esq., of Dalton Hall, near Huddersfield, are now in use among all classes of persons, from the nobility to humble mechanics ; and testimonials are daily received of the most astonishing cures, effected in cases where medical skill had long been exerted in vain. The principle upon which such cures are wrought by these Pills is perfectly consistent with true science and sound physiology. It is *by thoroughly purifying that vital principle, THE BLOOD* :—by exciting in the system a war of extermination against all obstructions, however obstinate, and all impurities, however deeply lodged. Wherever impurities are allowed to accumulate in the system, disorganization ensues. If the lodgement be in the bowels it produces disorders there ; if in the lungs it causes contractions, and a severe cough ensues. Stomachic affections proceed from the same cause, giving rise to headaches, bilious attacks, rheumatism, spasms, and many other afflicting disorders, the mere enumeration of which would occupy a large space.

Though KAYE'S WORSDELL'S PILLS are perfectly free from mercurial, mineral, and other poisonous substances, and though they may be taken with safety by persons of the most delicate age or constitution, they are powerful to afford immediate and permanent relief. Their office is to go at once to the root of disease,—to emancipate, so to speak, the organs which have been bound down by vitiated humours, bringing them into full operation, and enabling them to perform their functions in a healthful and vigorous manner. Let but their use be persevered in, and they will be found powerful to promote a free circulation—to create and strengthen appetite—to aid the process of digestion—to banish oppression from the brain—to increase muscular energy—and to preserve and improve the general health. These are high pretensions ; but the experience and observation of several years, warrants the Proprietor in asserting them with the utmost confidence.

### CURE OF COUGH AND RHEUMATISM.

"I, GEORGE HOLMES, of Queen Street, Whitehaven, do hereby thankfully certify, that I have, from the use of Kaye's Worsdell's Pills, been perfectly cured of a troublesome and dangerous cough and Rheumatic pains, which had arisen from a cold caught by sitting and reclining on the damp ground; and I feel pleasure in being able to add my testimony to the virtues of a Medicine which has been a blessing to me, and, I doubt not, is and will be to others."

August 16th, 1847.

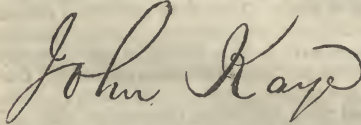
WILLIAM ROBSON, Monkwearmouth, near Sunderland, was so afflicted with *Lumbago*, as to be confined to his bed for six weeks, during which period he was unable to raise himself, except by means of a rope attached to the top of the bed. He took four doses of the *Vegetable Restorative Pills*, after which he was able to get up without assistance; and by the time he had taken a box, he was completely recovered. He expresses his gratitude for so valuable a medicine, and wishes his case to be made public for the benefit of his fellow-creatures.

Mr. FRANCIS ROWE, Shoemaker, St. Keverne, Cornwall, suffered for a long time from violent pains in his stomach. After every means suggested had failed, he tried Kaye's Worsdell's Pills, and before he had taken two boxes he felt himself in the enjoyment of good health, and, to use his own words, he calls them "the best pills in the world."

Mr. THOMAS CHALDER, Chapel Row, Shildon, near Bishop Auckland, was a great sufferer from a stomach complaint. He could not take the least portion of animal food without feeling much pain and dreadful sickness. He was recommended to try Kaye's Worsdell's Pills, and has been quite cured by persevering in the use of them.

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# REMEMBER SEPTEMBER.

REMEMBER September—when all will require  
A change for the season—a change of attire.  
The dress that you wore in the Midsummer days,  
Adapted in make to the sun's burning rays—  
Must now be cast off for a different sort,  
Which at Moses and Son's noted house may be bought.

Remember September—and see what is done  
For the season of Autumn by MOSES and SON !  
The newest of styles they have lately designed,  
With cloth of a very superior kind ;  
As soon as you 've seen, you will greatly admire  
Their splendid assortment of Autumn attire.

Remember September—when people should "don"  
The overcoats made by E. MOSES and SON ;  
A dress-coat or frock-coat is hardly enough  
For the cold winds of Autumn, which sometimes are rough.  
And, hence, you should instantly take my advice,  
And an over-coat buy for a very low price.

Remember September—and, if you 've a gun,  
Buy a coat for the field, of E. MOSES and SON ;  
The shooting-coats purchased of MOSES, are such  
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In conclusion I say, don't forget to remember  
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" Taglionis, silk collar and cuffs . . . . .	1	2	0	Cashmerette Codringtons . . . . .	0	16	6
Cambridge Coat, lined throughout . . . . .	2	5	0	Cambridge's Chesterfield Polkas, and all the newest Patterns . . . . . from	0	18	0
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Tweed Coat . . . . .	0	16	0	Sporting Coats . . . . .	0	6	6
Sporting Coat . . . . .	0	13	6	Dress Coats . . . . .	1	0	0
Dress Coat . . . . .	1	12	0	" Extra Superfine, a superior Coat	1	15	0
" Best quality manufactured . . . . .	2	15	0	Frock Coat . . . . .	1	4	0
" Best quality manufactured . . . . .	3	3	0	Extra Superfine, a superior Coat . . . . .	2	2	0
Rich Pattern Vest . . . . .	0	8	0	Roll Collar Vest . . . . .	0	2	0
Cassimere or Cloth . . . . .	0	8	6	Fancy Satins . . . . .	0	6	6
Tweed Trowsers . . . . .	0	8	0	Cloth or Cassimere . . . . .	0	9	6
Single Milled Doe Skin ditto . . . . .	1	2	0	Tweed Trowsers . . . . .	0	4	6
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